



US008714321B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Powell

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 8,714,321 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **May 6, 2014**

(54) **LONG TRAVEL SHOCK ABSORBER**

(76) Inventor: **Douglas Hunter Powell**, Eldorado Hills, CA (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 178 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/302,981**

(22) Filed: **Nov. 22, 2011**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2012/0306133 A1 Dec. 6, 2012

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/520,240, filed on Jun. 6, 2011.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
F16F 9/06 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **188/314**; 188/321.11

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 188/297, 303, 304, 312, 314, 321.11, 188/322.19; 267/118, 124, 126, 127
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

1,595,330 A	8/1926	Woodward
2,363,485 A	11/1944	Down
2,653,683 A	9/1953	Strauss
2,676,676 A	4/1954	Strauss et al.
3,101,131 A	8/1963	Bourcier De Carbon et al.
3,378,110 A	4/1968	Parrish, Jr.
3,447,797 A	6/1969	Roberts
3,731,914 A	5/1973	Cope et al.
3,854,710 A *	12/1974	Nicholls 280/6.159

4,061,320 A	12/1977	Warner
4,145,036 A	3/1979	Moonen et al.
4,311,302 A	1/1982	Heyer et al.
4,408,751 A	10/1983	Dodson et al.
4,832,318 A	5/1989	Wang
5,096,168 A *	3/1992	Takehara et al. 267/220
5,409,087 A	4/1995	Angermann et al.
5,454,550 A	10/1995	Christopherson
5,660,379 A *	8/1997	Oest 267/126
5,667,031 A	9/1997	Karpik
5,810,128 A	9/1998	Eriksson et al.
6,105,740 A	8/2000	Marzocchi et al.
6,244,398 B1	6/2001	Girvin et al.
6,374,966 B1	4/2002	Lillbacka
6,556,907 B1 *	4/2003	Sakai 701/37
6,725,983 B2	4/2004	Bell
6,776,269 B1	8/2004	Schel
6,883,650 B2	4/2005	Van Wonderen et al.
7,281,704 B2 *	10/2007	Salice 267/124
7,478,708 B2 *	1/2009	Bugaj 188/304
7,513,490 B2	4/2009	Robertson
8,047,343 B1 *	11/2011	Chen 188/322.19
2003/0051957 A1	3/2003	Lemieux

(Continued)

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

WO WO 9313954 A1 * 7/1993

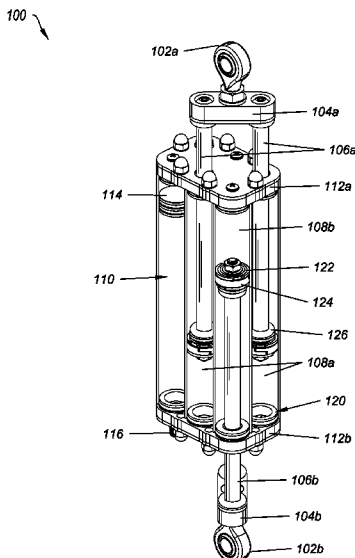
Primary Examiner — Anna Momper

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Superior IP, PLLC; Dustin L. Call

(57) **ABSTRACT**

One example embodiment includes a fluid based shock absorber. The fluid based shock absorber includes a first assembly. The first assembly includes a first compression chamber. The first assembly also includes a first sliding member. At least a portion of the first sliding member is configured to remain within the first compression chamber and the first sliding member is configured to move in a first direction relative to the first compression chamber.

15 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



(56)

References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

2004/0119217 A1 6/2004 Kon

2006/0163017 A1 7/2006 Verriet
2009/0315376 A1* 12/2009 Nishiwaki 297/301.2
2011/0162928 A1* 7/2011 Wilson 188/322.19

* cited by examiner

100 ↘

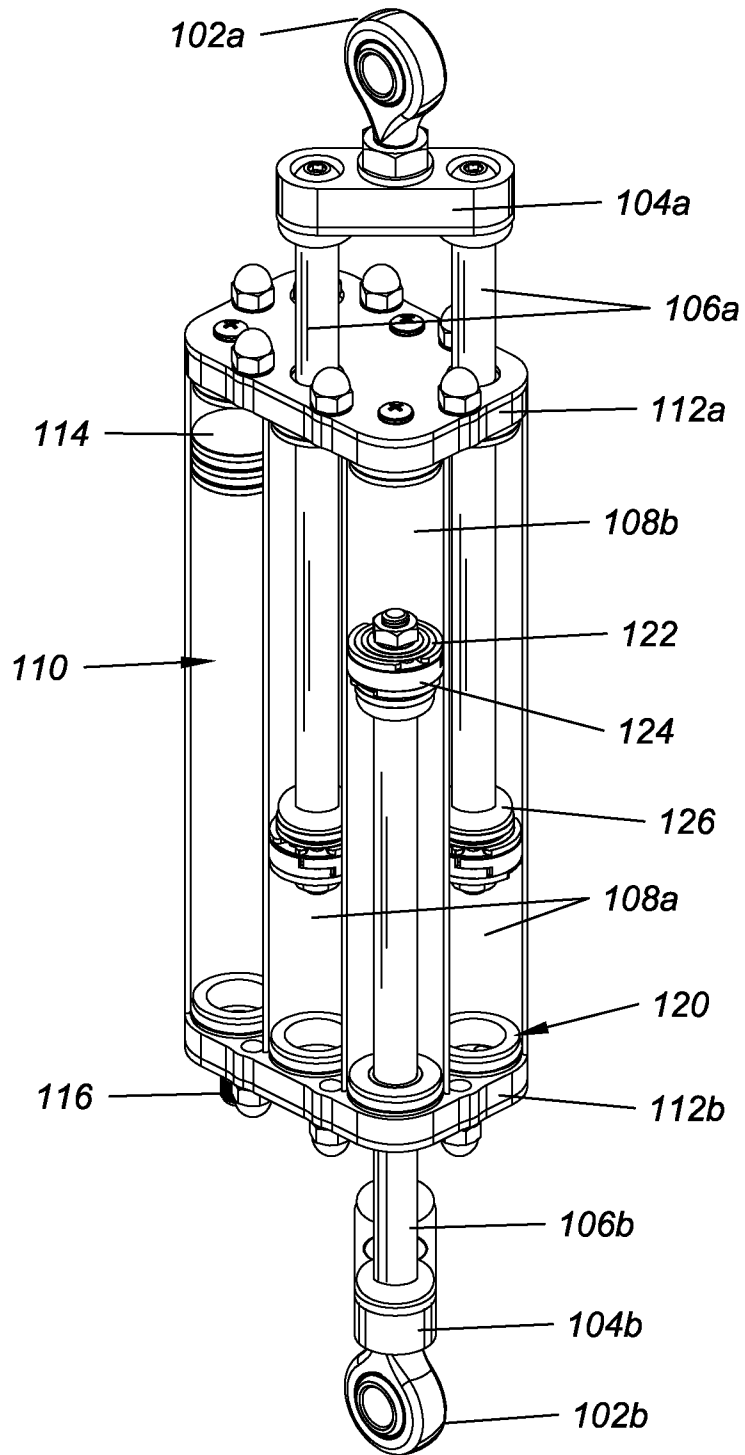


FIG. 1A

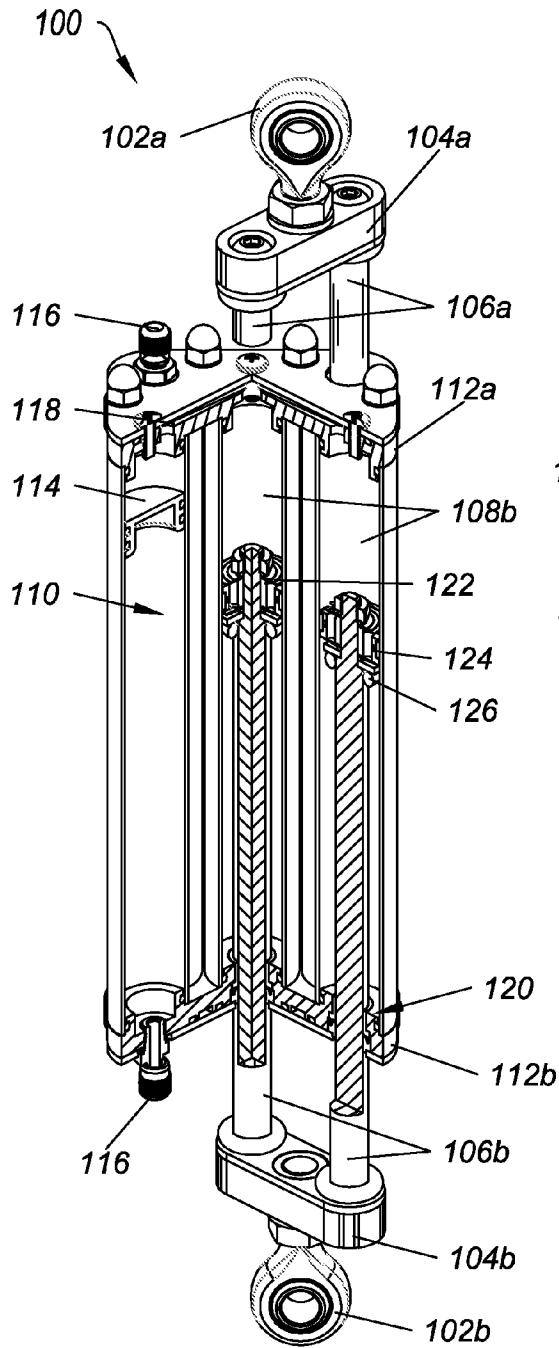


FIG. 1B

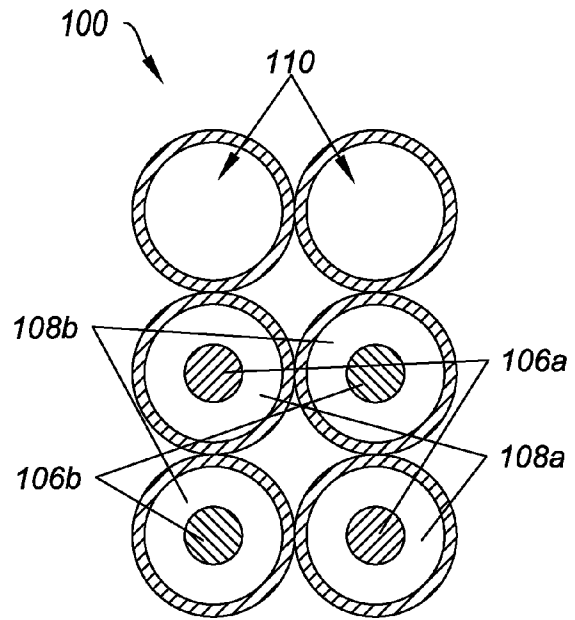


FIG. 1C

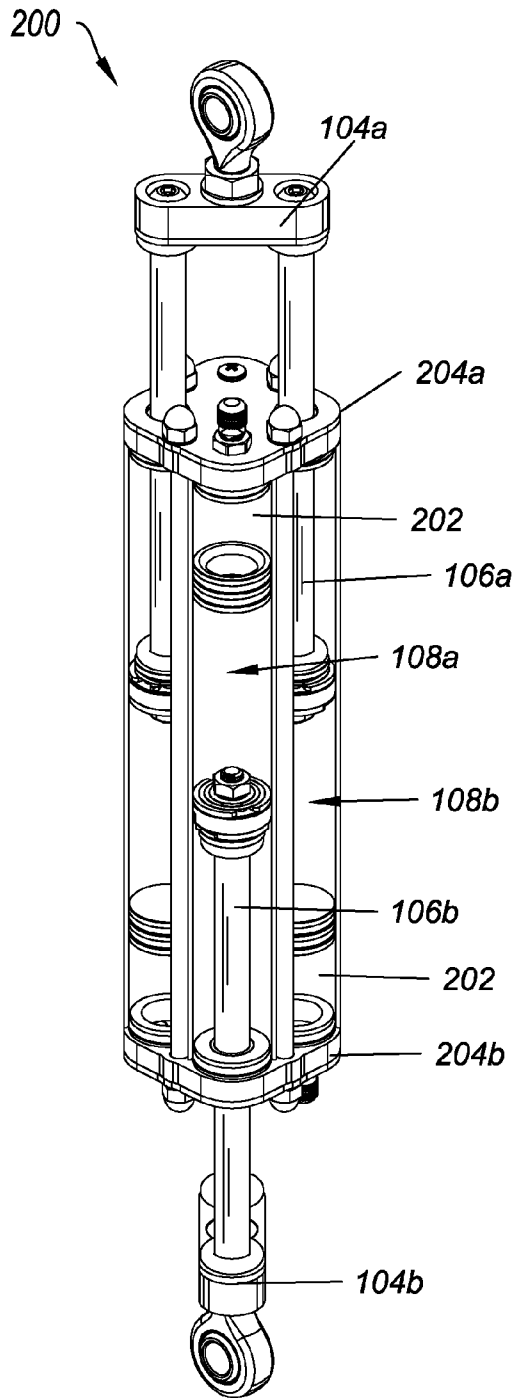


FIG. 2A

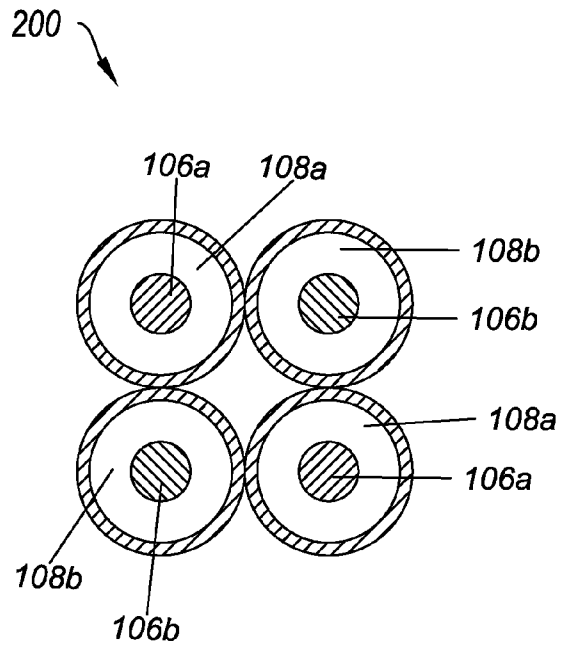


FIG. 2B

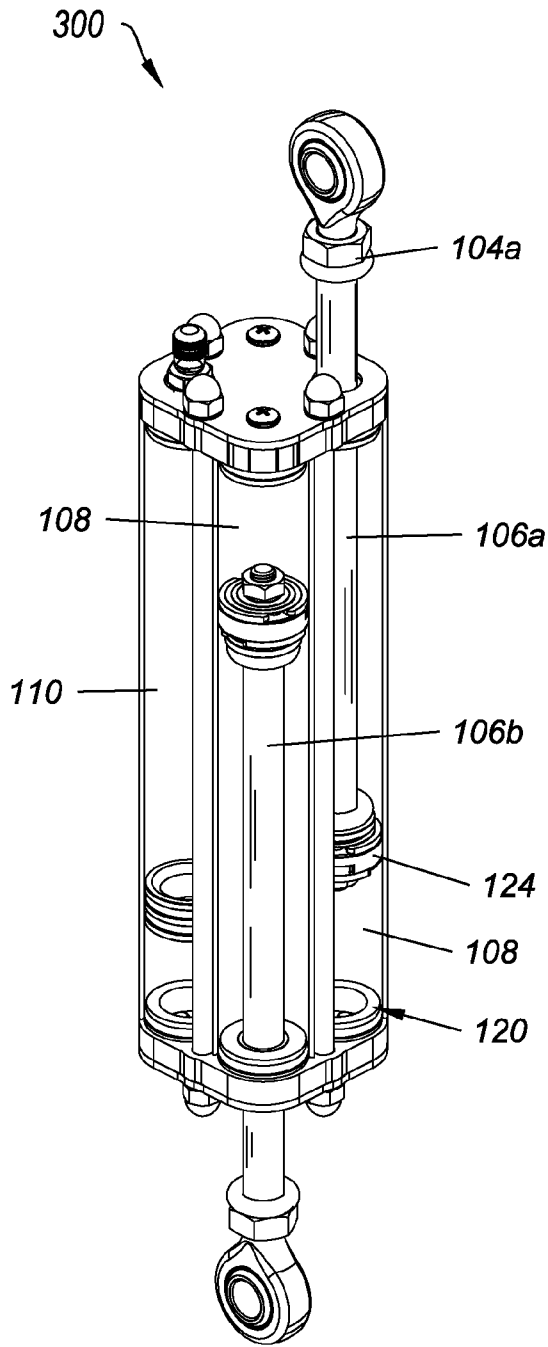


FIG. 3A

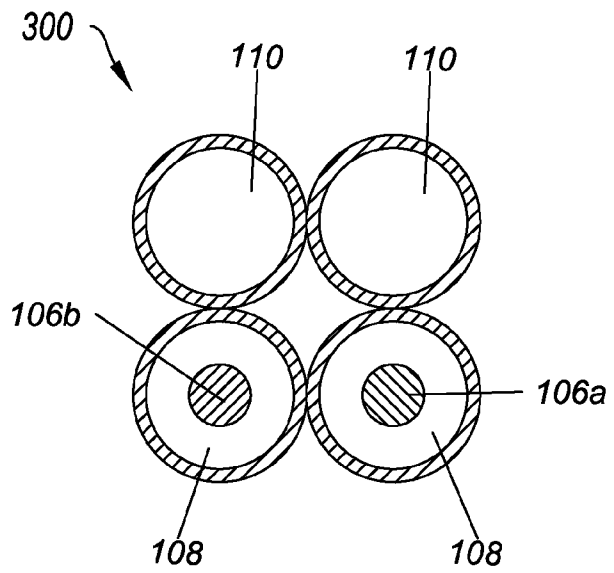


FIG. 3B

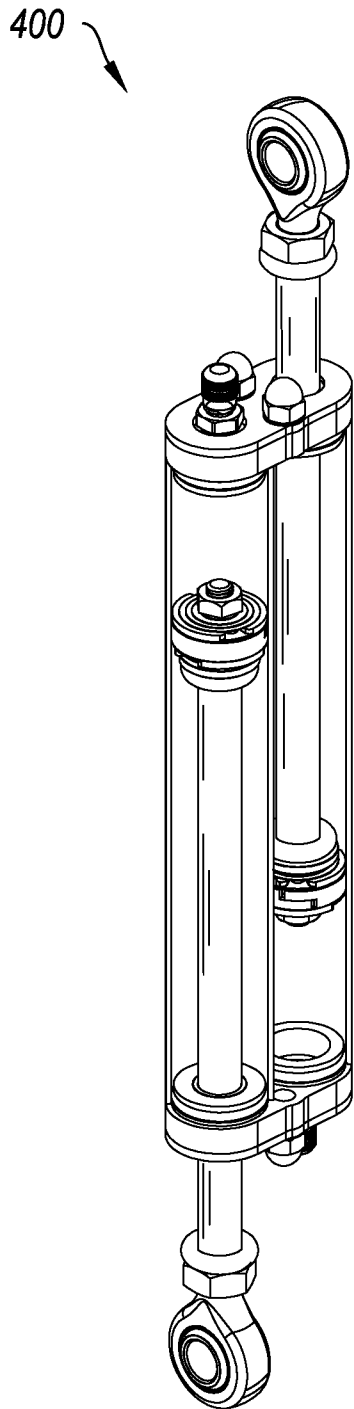


FIG. 4A

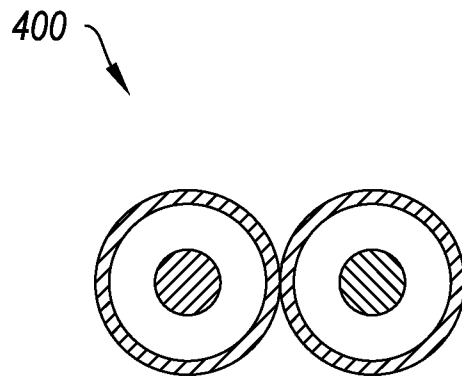


FIG. 4B

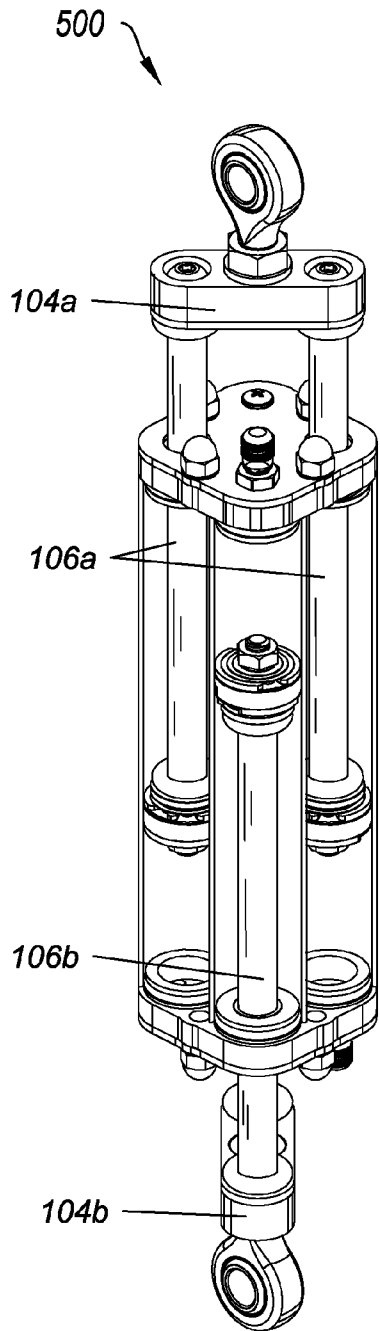


FIG. 5A

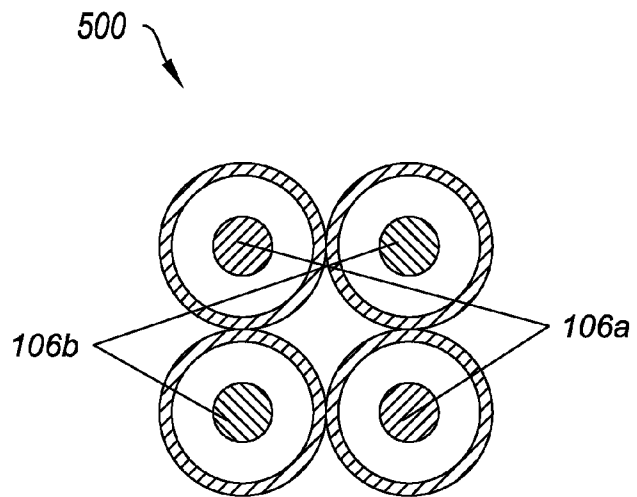


FIG. 5B

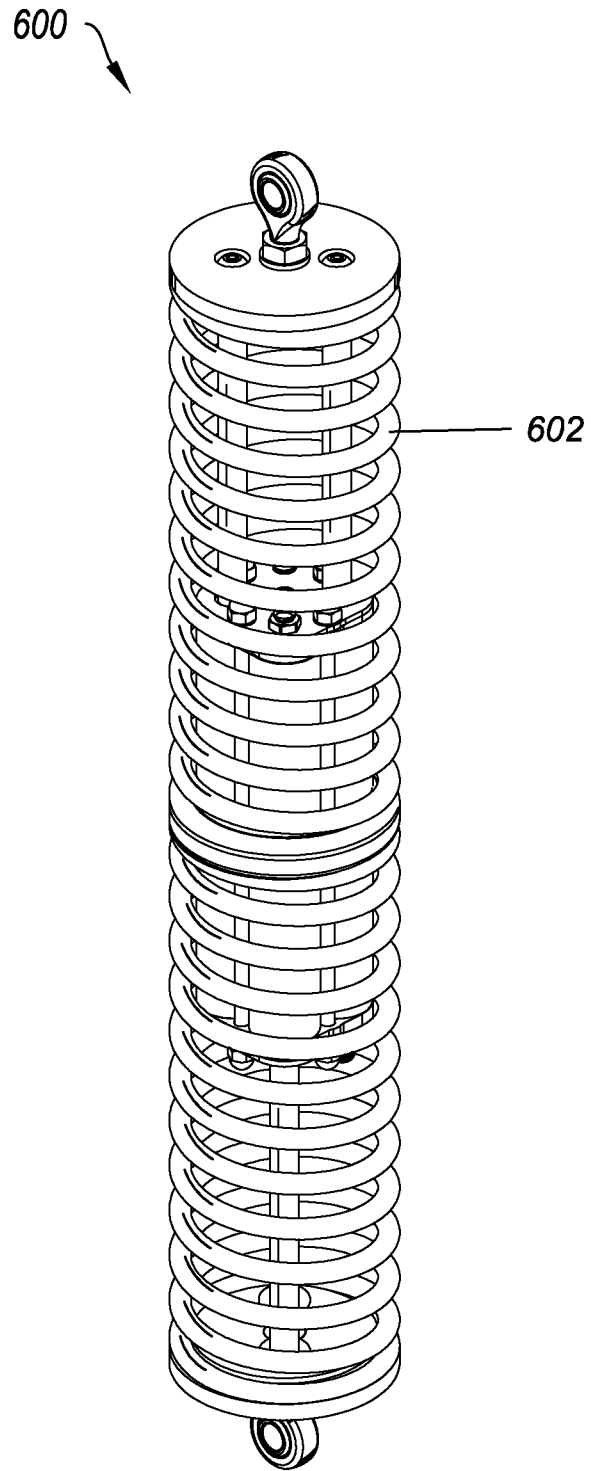


FIG. 6

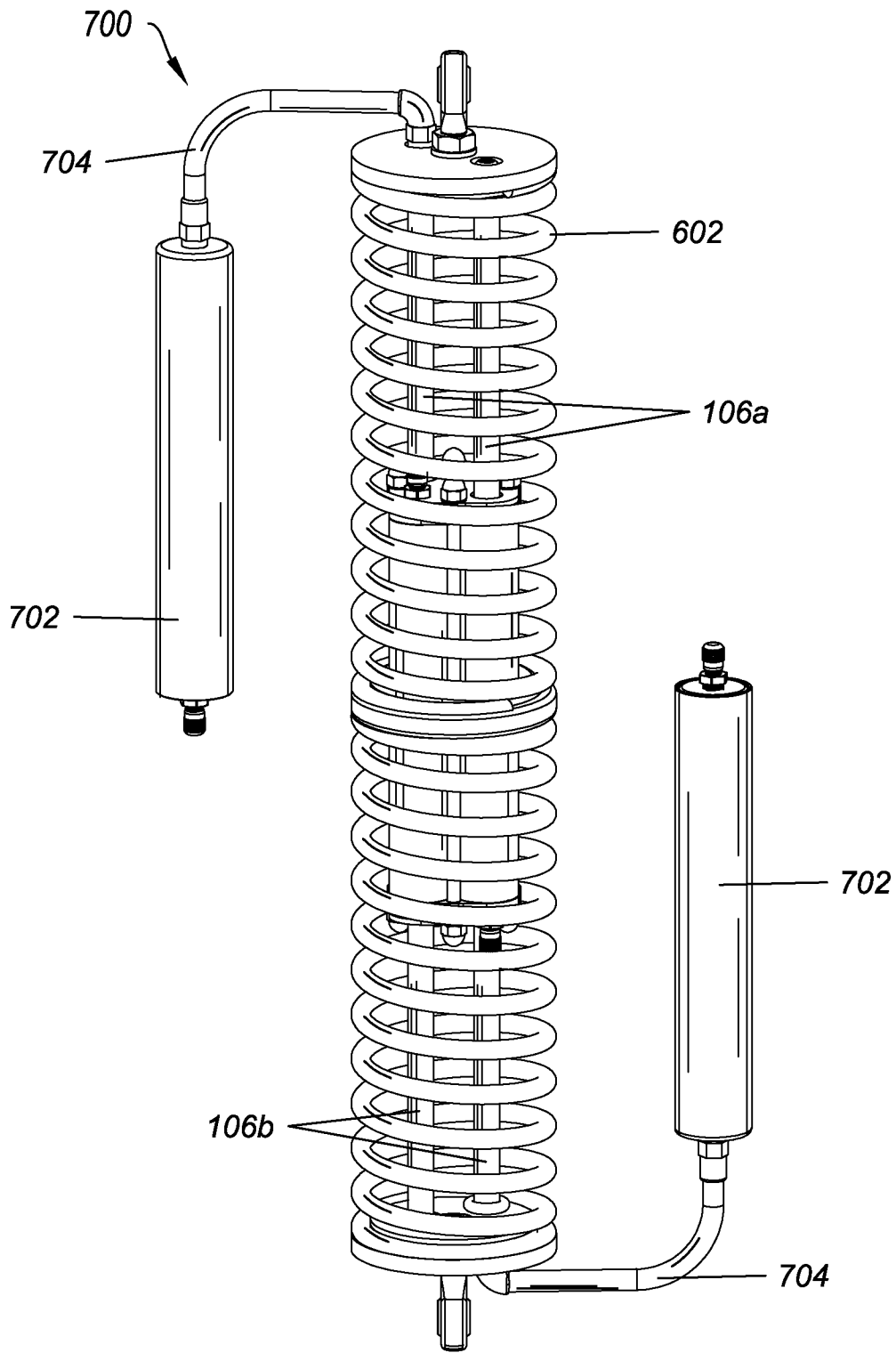


FIG. 7

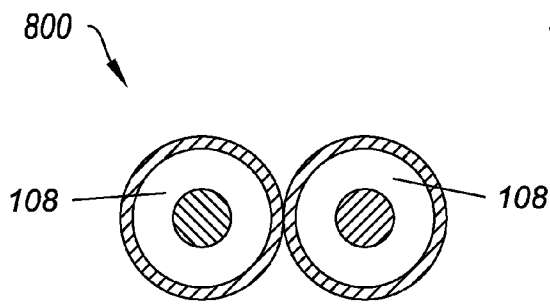


FIG. 8

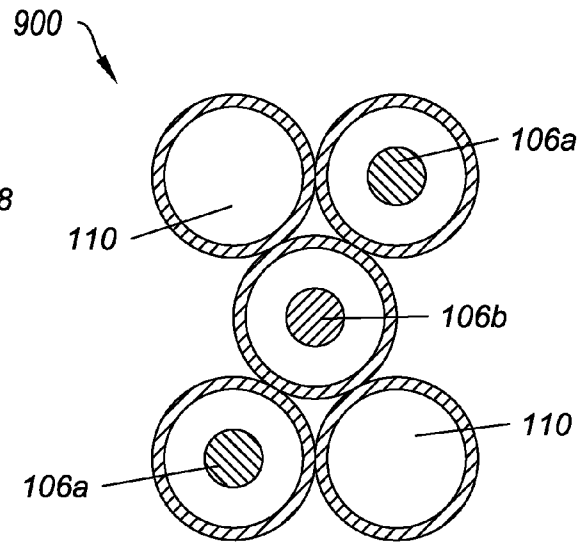


FIG. 9

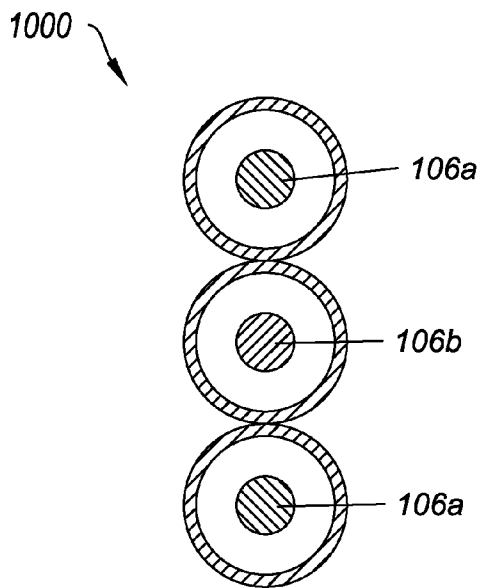


FIG. 10

LONG TRAVEL SHOCK ABSORBER**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS**

This application claims the benefit of and priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/520,240 filed on Jun. 6, 2011, which application is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Shock absorbers are a common mechanical component in vehicles. For example, shock absorbers are found in cars, trucks, SUVs, semi-trucks, construction equipment, off-road vehicles and even industrial equipment. Shock absorbers are designed to dampen or reduce vertical motion of the vehicle when the wheels of the vehicle encounter a bump or a dip. In particular, shock absorbers dampen force, motion and energy between the passenger compartment of the vehicle and the wheels of the vehicle. Shock absorbers use pneumatic and/or hydraulic forces to reduce the speed at which the vehicle moves in a vertical direction in response to changing terrain, even when the wheels move toward or away from the vehicle. I.e., if a force tends to move the wheels toward the vehicle, such as a bump, the shock absorber dissipates the energy behind the force thus reducing the amplitude of the motion of the passenger compartment relative to the wheels.

However, shock absorbers suffer from a number of drawbacks. For example, the distance that the shock absorber can expand or stroke relative to its fully contracted length is limited in magnitude to a length that is less than the length of the shock body or compression chamber. I.e., the amount that one piston and shaft assembly can travel within its compression chamber. This is substantially less than its contracted length. In particular, a portion of the piston and shaft assembly must remain within the compression chamber, otherwise the attachment between the two is lost and the shock absorber is non-functional. I.e., there is a finite amount of space available in a vehicle suspension for the fully contracted length of a shock absorber, therefore prior art shocks absorbers are limited in expansion or stroke to a distance less than this finite space. Once this maximum is achieved, the connection between the wheels and the vehicle once more becomes a rigid connection, transmitting all motion to the passenger compartment.

In addition, shock absorbers generally utilize a single shaft. Thus, all of the force being transmitted through the wheels must be transmitted through this single shaft. This can lead to a great deal of wear on the shock absorbers. In fact, shock absorbers may wear out rather quickly in vehicles that tend to encounter rough terrain, such as off-road vehicles.

Accordingly, there is a need in the art for a shock absorber in which the distance between full contraction and full expansion or stroke is increased relative to the fully contracted length over conventional shock absorbers. In addition, there is a need in the art for the shock absorber to include multiple shafts.

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF SOME EXAMPLE
EMBODIMENTS**

This Summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that are further described below in the Detailed Description. This Summary is not intended to identify key features or essential characteristics of the

claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used as an aid in determining the scope of the claimed subject matter.

One example embodiment includes a fluid based shock absorber. The fluid based shock absorber includes a first assembly. The first assembly includes a first compression chamber. The first assembly also includes a first sliding member. At least a portion of the first sliding member is configured to remain within the first compression chamber and the first sliding member is configured to move in a first direction relative to the first compression chamber.

Another example embodiment includes a fluid based shock absorber. The fluid based shock absorber includes a first assembly. The first assembly includes a first compression chamber. The first assembly also includes a first sliding member. At least a portion of the first sliding member is configured to remain within the first compression chamber and the first sliding member is configured to move in a first direction relative to the first compression chamber. The fluid based shock absorber also includes a second assembly. The second assembly includes a second compression chamber. The second assembly also includes a second sliding member. At least a portion of the second sliding member is configured to remain within the second compression chamber and the second sliding member is configured to move in a second direction relative to the second compression chamber.

Another example embodiment includes a fluid based shock absorber. The fluid based shock absorber includes a first assembly. The first assembly includes a first compression chamber. The first assembly also includes a first sliding member. At least a portion of the first sliding member is configured to remain within the first compression chamber and the first sliding member is configured to move in a first direction relative to the first compression chamber. The fluid based shock absorber also includes a second assembly. The second assembly includes a second compression chamber. The second assembly also includes a second sliding member. At least a portion of the second sliding member is configured to remain within the second compression chamber and the second sliding member is configured to move in a second direction relative to the second compression chamber. The fluid based shock absorber further includes a third assembly. The third assembly includes a third compression chamber. The third assembly also includes a third sliding member. At least a portion of the third sliding member is configured to remain within the third compression chamber and the third sliding member is configured to move in a first direction relative to the third compression chamber. The fluid based shock absorber additionally includes a fourth assembly. The fourth assembly includes a fourth compression chamber. The fourth assembly also includes a fourth sliding member. At least a portion of the fourth sliding member is configured to remain within the fourth compression chamber and the fourth sliding member is configured to move in a second direction relative to the fourth compression chamber. The fluid based shock absorber also includes a first reservoir. The first reservoir chamber includes a separating piston. The separating piston is configured to divide the first reservoir chamber into a reserve gas chamber and a reserve fluid chamber. The fluid based shock absorber further includes a second reservoir chamber. The second reservoir chamber includes a separating piston. The separating piston is configured to divide the second reservoir chamber into a reserve gas chamber and a reserve fluid chamber. The fluid based shock absorber additionally includes a first fluid channel. The first fluid channel connects the reserve fluid chamber of the first reservoir chamber to the first compression chamber and to the third compression chamber. The first fluid channel is configured to allow fluid to

pass between the reserve fluid chamber of the first reservoir chamber, the first compression chamber and the third compression chamber. The fluid based shock absorber also includes a second fluid channel. The second fluid channel connects the reserve fluid chamber of the second reservoir chamber to the second compression chamber and to the fourth compression chamber. The second fluid channel is configured to allow fluid to pass between the reserve fluid chamber of the second reservoir chamber, the second compression chamber and the fourth compression chamber.

These and other objects and features of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, or may be learned by the practice of the invention as set forth hereinafter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

To further clarify various aspects of some example embodiments of the present invention, a more particular description of the invention will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments thereof which are illustrated in the appended drawings. It is appreciated that these drawings depict only illustrated embodiments of the invention and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope. The invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1A illustrates a top perspective view of an example of a shock absorber;

FIG. 1B illustrates a cut away view of the example of the shock absorber;

FIG. 1C illustrates a cross-sectional view of the example of the shock absorber;

FIG. 2A illustrates a top perspective view of an alternative example of a shock absorber;

FIG. 2B illustrates a cross-sectional view of the alternative example of a shock absorber;

FIG. 3A illustrates a top perspective view of an alternative example of a shock absorber;

FIG. 3B illustrates a cross-sectional view of the alternative example of a shock absorber;

FIG. 4A illustrates a top perspective view of an example of an emulsion shock absorber;

FIG. 4B illustrates a cross-sectional view of the example of an emulsion shock absorber;

FIG. 5A illustrates a top perspective view of an alternative example of an emulsion shock absorber;

FIG. 5B illustrates a cross-sectional view of the alternative example of an emulsion shock absorber;

FIG. 6 illustrates an example of a coilover shock absorber;

FIG. 7 illustrates an alternative example of a coilover shock absorber;

FIG. 8 illustrates a cross-sectional view of an alternative shock absorber;

FIG. 9 illustrates a cross-sectional view of an alternative shock absorber; and

FIG. 10 illustrates a cross-sectional view of an alternative shock absorber.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SOME EXAMPLE EMBODIMENTS

Reference will now be made to the figures wherein like structures will be provided with like reference designations. It is understood that the figures are diagrammatic and schematic

representations of some embodiments of the invention, and are not limiting of the present invention, nor are they necessarily drawn to scale.

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C illustrate an example of a shock absorber **100**. FIG. 1A illustrates a top perspective view of example of a shock absorber **100**; FIG. 1B illustrates a cut away view of the example of the shock absorber **100**; and FIG. 1C illustrates a cross-sectional view of the example of the shock absorber **100**. In at least one implementation, the shock absorber **100** can be used to prevent abrupt vertical movement of a vehicle. I.e., as a vehicle encounters a terrain change the shock absorber **100** can dissipate the energy and lessen the vertical movement of the passenger area of the vehicle.

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C show that the shock absorber **100** can include a first attachment **102a** and a second attachment **102b** (collectively "attachments **102**"). In at least one implementation, the attachments **102** are configured to attach the shock absorber **100** to an external device, such as a vehicle. For example, the attachments **102** can include spherical ball joints with integrated lock nuts for securely locking the spherical ball joints in fixed positions. Additionally or alternatively, the attachments **102** can include a steel sleeve and cylindrical rubber bushing or a vertical threaded rod with sandwiched rubber disks.

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C also show that the shock absorber **100** can include a first end link **104a** and a second end link **104b** (collectively "end links **104**"). In at least one implementation, the end links **104** can be connected to the attachments **102**. I.e., as the external device transmits a force to the shock absorber **100**, the force is transmitted through the attachments **102** to the end links **104** and through the end links **104** to the rest of the shock absorber **100**. Likewise, as the shock absorber **100** provides a resisting force to the external device, the resisting force is transmitted through the end links **104** to the attachments **102** and through the attachments **102** to the external device.

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C further show that the shock absorber **100** can include a first set of sliding shafts **106a** and a second set of sliding shafts **106b** (collectively "sets of sliding shafts **106**" or "sliding shafts **106**"). In at least one implementation, the first set of sliding shafts **106a** and the second set of sliding shafts **106b** can be attached to the first end link **104a** and the second end link **104b** respectively. Attaching the sets of sliding shafts **106** to the end links **104** can ensure that the sliding shafts **106** within each set move in tandem with one another. Additionally or alternatively, the end links **104** prevent the sliding shafts **106** from rotating relative to the end links **104**. Preventing the sliding shafts **106** from rotating can improve ease of assembly, disassembly and maintenance of the shock absorber **100**.

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C additionally show that the shock absorber **100** can include a first compression chamber **108a** and a second compression chamber **108b** (collectively "compression chambers **108**"). In at least one implementation, each compression chamber **108** is configured to contain one of the sliding shafts **106**. In particular, the sliding shafts **106** are allowed to move in a single direction within the compression chamber **108**. In addition, the compression chamber **108** can contain a compression fluid which can dissipate applied forces, as described below. As used in the specification and the claims, the term fluid shall include a substance capable of flowing that is, changes its shape or volume when acted upon by a force. For example, a fluid can include a liquid or a gas.

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C also show that the shock absorber **100** can include one or more reservoir chambers **110**. In at least one implementation, the reservoir chambers **110** can contain compressible fluid or gas. In particular, the additional

compressible fluid or gas can allow the first set of sliding shafts **106a** and the second set of sliding shafts **106b** to move a large distance relative to one another. I.e., the first set of sliding shafts **106a** and the second set of sliding shafts **106b** can move the full distance within their respective compression chambers **108** by utilizing the compressible property of fluid or gas within the reservoir chambers **110**.

FIGS. **1A**, **1B** and **1C** further show that the shock absorber **100** can include a first end cap **112a** and a second end cap **112b** (collectively “end caps **112**”). In at least one implementation, the sliding shafts **106** can pass through the end caps **112** such that a portion of the sliding shafts **106** remain within the compression chambers **108** and a portion remains outside of the compression chambers **108**. In addition, the end caps **112** can keep the compression fluid within the compression chambers **108** and the compressible fluid within reservoir chambers **110**. Additionally or alternatively, the end caps **112** can prevent external materials from entering the compression chambers **108** and the reservoir chambers **110**. In at least one implementation, the end caps **112** can include one or more sealing bleed screws creating a removal plug and seal for the filling of compression fluid.

FIGS. **1A**, **1B** and **1C** additionally show that the shock absorber **100** can include a separating piston **114** within each of the reservoir chambers **110**. In at least one implementation, the separating piston **114** can divide the reservoir chamber **110** into a reserve gas chamber and a reserve fluid chamber. In particular, the separating piston **114** can include a seal between the perimeter of the separating piston **114** and the interior wall of the reservoir chamber **110** which creates a fluid/gas tight seal between the reserve gas chamber and the reserve fluid chamber.

FIGS. **1A**, **1B** and **1C** also show that the shock absorber **100** can include a valve **116** on each of the reservoir chambers **110**. In at least one implementation, the reservoir chamber **110** can be charged with gas pressure through the valve **116**, creating a force against the separating piston **114**, the force of the separating piston **114** against the fluid in the reserve fluid chamber pressurizes the fluid in the reserve fluid chamber to a similar pressure that is in the charged reserve gas chamber. Pressurizing the fluid via a pressurized reservoir chamber **100** reduces the chances of cavitation. Cavitation is the formation and then immediate implosion of cavities in a liquid—i.e. small liquid-free zones (“bubbles”)—that are the consequence of forces acting upon the liquid. It usually occurs when a liquid is subjected to rapid changes of pressure that cause the formation of cavities where the pressure is relatively low.

FIGS. **1A**, **1B** and **1C** further show that shock absorber **100** includes a fluid channel **118**. In at least one implementation, the reserve fluid chamber is connected to the fluid in two of the compression chambers **108** via the fluid channel **118**. The fluid channel **118** can allow the compression chambers **108** to be pressurized using the reservoir chamber **110**. I.e., the reservoir chamber **110** and the connected compression chamber **108** can be equalized in pressure via the fluid channel **118**. Pressurizing the fluid in the compression chamber **108** via a pressurized reservoir chamber **110** can allow the reservoir chamber **110** to compress and decompress via movement of the separating piston **114**, allowing the sliding shafts **106** to move relative to the compression chamber **108**.

In at least one implementation, two opposing reserve gas chambers can provide opposite extruding forces on the first set of sliding shafts **106** and the second set of sliding shafts **106**. In particular, the reserve gas chamber in reservoir chamber **110** is independently charged via the valve **116**. Reservoir chamber **110** in turn pressurizes the fluid in the compression

chambers **108** containing the second set of sliding shafts **106b**. This fluid pressure results in an extruding force that pushes the sliding shafts **106b** downward and away from the main body assembly of the shock absorber **100**.

An opposing reserve gas chamber is independently charged via the valve **116** at the top of FIGS. **1A**, **1B** and **1C**. This opposing reserve gas chamber pressurizes the fluid in the two compression chambers **108** containing the first set of sliding shafts **106a**. This fluid pressure results in an extruding force that pushes the first set of sliding shafts **106a** upward and away from the main body assembly of the shock absorber **100**.

Balancing the gas pressure in both opposing reserve gas chambers, results in equal and opposite extruding forces on the first set of sliding shafts **106a** and the second set of sliding shafts **106b**. Therefore as the first attachment **102a** and the second attachment **102b** move relative to one another in the normal operation of the shock absorber **100** the equal and opposite extruding forces on the first set of sliding shafts **106a** and the second set of sliding shafts **106b** keeps the main body assembly of the shock absorber **100** centrally located between the first attachment **102a** and the second attachment **102b**.

In addition, the fluid channel **118** can help prevent wear on the end links **104**. In particular, during normal operation of the shock absorber **100** it is important that the forces applied by the two sliding shafts **106** connected to a particular end link **104** are equal. If the forces applied by the two sliding shafts **106** are unequal during the millions of cycles experienced by the shock absorber **100** the end links **104** would eventually fatigue and fail. The fluid channel **118** works as a pressure by-pass between the two compression chambers **108** associated with the two acting sliding shafts **106** connected to a single end link **104** (for example, between sliding shafts **106a** and compression chambers **108a**), assuring that the pressure in the two compression chambers **108** remain the same. I.e., the pressure balancing function of the fluid circuitry channel assures that the forces applied by the two sliding shafts **106** on the end links **104** are equal at all times during normal operation of the shock absorber **100**.

FIGS. **1A**, **1B** and **1C** additionally show that the shock absorber **100** can include transitions **120** between each of the sliding shafts **106** and the end caps **112**. In at least one implementation, the transitions **120** can protect the sliding shafts **106** and the end caps **112** while the sliding shafts **106** are moving relative to the end caps **112**. For example, the transitions **120** can include bearings which allow the sliding shafts **106** to move relative to the end caps **112** without causing extensive wear to either the sliding shafts **106** or the end caps **112**. In addition, the transitions **120** can include bumpers such that the sliding shafts **106** do not damage the end caps **112** when the sliding shafts **106** reach the end of their range of movement. Additionally or alternatively, the transitions **120** can include seals which prevent the compression fluid from leaking out of the compression chambers **108** as the sliding shafts **106** either enter or exit the compression chambers **108**.

FIGS. **1A**, **1B** and **1C** also show that the shock absorber **100** can include a damping assembly **122** on each sliding shaft **106**. In at least one implementation, the damping assembly **122** can prevent motion of the compression fluid around the damping assembly **122**. I.e., the damping assembly **122** can form a seal with the compression chamber **108**, preventing compression fluid from passing the damping assembly **122**. Additionally or alternatively, the damping assembly **122** can include an integral valve system for controlled fluid flow through the damping assembly **122**. For example, the integral valve system can include flexible disks located on both sides of a central piston that cover fluid passages through the cen-

tral piston in order to control fluid flow from the fluid on one side of the damping assembly 122 to the other side of the damping assembly 122. Control of the fluid flow can allow the shock absorber 100 to compress or contract more slowly than it would otherwise compress or contract, reducing the “shock” felt by the external device.

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C further show that the shock absorber 100 can include a wear band 124 on each sliding shaft 106. In at least one implementation, the wear band 124 is located on the perimeter of the central piston allowing the damping assembly 122 to slide along the interior wall of the compression chamber 108 preventing substantial wear or damage to the compression chamber 108 or damping assembly 122. Additionally or alternatively, the wear band 124 also serves as a fluid seal between the compression chamber 108 and the damping assembly 122.

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C additionally show that the shock absorber 100 can include an internal bumper 126. In at least one implementation, the internal bumper 126 can prevent damage to either the damping assembly 122 or the compression chamber 108 when the sliding shaft 106 reaches the ends of the compression chamber 108. For example, the internal bumper 126 can include a rigid support disk separated from the flexible disks by a spacing washer. The rigid support disk can have dual functionality. For example, it can prevent the flexible disks from over flexing or permanently deforming. In addition, it can serve as a support plate for a stop. The stop can act as a protective layer preventing damage to both the damping assembly 122 and the compression chamber 108.

FIGS. 2A and 2B illustrate an alternative example of a shock absorber 200. FIG. 2A illustrates a top perspective view of the alternative example of a shock absorber 200; and FIG. 2B illustrates a cross-sectional view of the alternative example of a shock absorber 200. Though this configuration is cost effective and functional it does reduce the stroke or travel length of the shock absorber 200 relative to the fully compressed length of the shock absorber 200. In particular, the travel length of the shock absorber 200 is reduced relative to the shock absorber 100 of FIG. 1.

FIGS. 2A and 2B show that the shock absorber 200 can include a reserve gas chamber 202 that is not remote to the compression chamber 108. I.e., the reserve gas chamber 202 is located within the compression chamber 108. This configuration is commonly referred to as a Mono-Tube shock absorber. The function of the reserve gas chamber 202 is identical to that of reservoir chamber 110 in FIGS. 1A & 1B.

FIGS. 2A and 2B also show that the shock absorber 200 can include a first end cap 204a and a second end cap 204b (collectively “end caps 204”). In at least one implementation, the end caps 204 can include a gas circuitry channel (not visible in FIGS. 2A and 2B) similar to the fluid channel 118 in FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C which connects the two reserve gas chambers 202 at the top of FIGS. 2A and 2B. An additional gas circuitry channel (not visible in FIGS. 2A and 2B), can be located in the second end cap 204b, similar to the fluid channel 118 in FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C which connects the two reserve gas chambers 202 at the bottom of FIGS. 2A and 2B (one is not visible in FIGS. 2A and 2B). Connecting the associated reserve gas chambers 202 via a gas circuitry channel keeps the pressure in the associated two reserve gas chambers 202 equal and balanced, thus assuring that the forces applied by the two sliding shafts 106 on the end links 104 are equal at all times during normal operation of the shock absorber 200.

FIGS. 3A and 3B illustrate an alternative example of a shock absorber 300. FIG. 2A illustrates a top perspective view of the alternative example of a shock absorber 300; and FIG.

3B illustrates a cross-sectional view of the alternative example of a shock absorber 300. In at least one implementation, the shock absorber 300 is cost effective and reduces the size of the main body assembly relative to the shock absorber 100 of FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C. In particular, the shock absorber 300 can include fewer sliding shafts than the shock absorber 100.

In at least one implementation, the shock absorber 300 includes only two compression chamber 108, two opposing reservoir chambers 110, and only a single sliding shaft 106 protruding from each end of the main body assembly of the shock absorber 300. One of skill in the art will appreciate that using a single sliding shaft 106 on each end means that the attachments 102 do not travel along the same axis, instead the attachments 102 travel along paths that are adjacent and parallel to one another. This adjacent and parallel motion applies bending moments to the sliding shafts 106, side loading to transition 120, and side loading to the wear band 124, all of which reduce the functional life of the shock absorber 300.

FIGS. 4A and 4B illustrate an example of an emulsion shock absorber 400. FIG. 4A illustrates a top perspective view of the example of an emulsion shock absorber 400; and FIG. 4B illustrates a cross-sectional view of the example of an emulsion shock absorber 400. In at least one implementation, the emulsion shock absorber 400 can include a mixture of two or more fluids which are normally immiscible (un-blendable). I.e., an emulsion can include one fluid (the dispersed phase) dispersed in another fluid (the continuous phase). For example, the emulsion fluid can include a mixture of approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ liquid compression fluid and approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ gas. The emulsion can be less dense than using only compression fluid. However, the valving in the emulsion shock absorber 400 must be stronger and more resistance to fluid flow.

FIGS. 5A and 5B illustrate an example of an emulsion shock absorber 500. FIG. 5A illustrates a top perspective view of the example of an emulsion shock absorber 500; and FIG. 5B illustrates a cross-sectional view of the example of an emulsion shock absorber 500. In at least one implementation, the emulsion shock absorber 500 can combine the emulsion shock absorber of FIG. 4 with the shafts 106a that move in a first direction and the shafts 106b that move in a second direction of FIG. 1. I.e., the emulsion shock absorber 500 can include a first end link 104a and a second end link 104b which distributes forces among the first set of shafts 106a and the second set of shafts 106b respectively.

FIG. 6 illustrates an example of a coilover shock absorber 600. In at least one implementation, the coilover shock absorber 600 can be combined with a Mono-Tube gas reserve type shock absorber or Emulsion type shock absorber as described above. I.e., the coilover shock absorber 600 can be applied to either a mono-tube gas reserve shock absorber, such as the shock absorber 200 of FIG. 2 or an emulsion shock absorber, such as the emulsion shock absorber 400 of FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 shows that the shock absorber 600 can include a coil spring 602. In at least one implementation, the coil spring 602 spans from the first attachment 102a at one end of the shock absorber 600 to the second attachment 102b at the other end of the shock absorber 600. Additionally or alternatively, the coil spring can include a first spring that covers at least a portion of the first set of sliding shafts 106a and a second spring that covers at least a portion of the second set of sliding shafts 106b.

FIG. 7 illustrates an alternative example of a coilover shock absorber 700. In at least one implementation, the coilover shock absorber 700 combines the coil spring 602 of FIG. 6 with the remote gas reserve technology as described above.

9

FIG. 7 shows that the coilover shock absorber 700 can include one or more reservoir chambers 702. In at least one implementation, the reservoir chambers 702 can contain compressible fluid or gas. In particular, the additional compressible fluid or gas can allow the first set of sliding shafts 106a and the second set of sliding shafts 106b to move a large distance relative to one another. I.e., the first set of sliding shafts 106a and the second set of sliding shafts 106b can move the full distance within their respective compression chambers by utilizing the compressible property of fluid or gas within the reservoir chambers 702.

FIG. 7 also shows that the coilover shock absorber 700 can include a connector 704. In at least one implementation, the reservoir chamber 702 is connected to the fluid the compression chambers via the connector 704. I.e., the reservoir chamber 702 and the connected compression chamber 108 can exchange compression fluid via the connector 704. For example, the connector 704 can include a hose or other fluid connector.

FIG. 8 illustrates a cross-sectional view of an alternative shock absorber 800. In at least one implementation, the shock absorber includes the Mono-Tube configuration described in the example of FIG. 2 combined with the example of FIG. 4. I.e., the shock absorber 800 can be further reduced in size to just two compression chambers 108 with integral reserve gas chambers 202 of FIG. 2. This example would be most cost effective and further reduce the size of the main body assembly into just two compression chamber 108. This example, however, would also have the reduced travel or stroke inherent in the example of FIG. 2 as well as the reduced functional life inherent in the example of FIG. 3.

FIG. 9 illustrates a cross-sectional view of an alternative shock absorber 900. In at least one implementation, the shock absorber 900 can include a pair of sliding shafts 106a opposite a single sliding shaft 106b. This can remove the problems of parallel motions rather than opposing motions as discussed with regard to FIG. 3. The three sliding shafts 106 can be combined with two reservoir chambers 110, as discussed with regard to FIG. 1.

FIG. 10 illustrates a cross-sectional view of an alternative shock absorber 1000. In at least one implementation, the shock absorber 1000 can include a pair of sliding shafts 106 opposite a single sliding shaft 106. This can remove the problems of parallel motions rather than opposing motions as discussed with regard to FIG. 3. The three sliding shafts 106 can be combined with either a mono-tube gas reserve shock absorber, such as the shock absorber 200 of FIG. 2 or an emulsion shock absorber, such as the emulsion shock absorber 400 of FIG. 4.

The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative and not restrictive. The scope of the invention is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims rather than by the foregoing description. All changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

What is claimed is:

1. A fluid based shock absorber, the fluid based shock absorber comprising:

a first assembly, wherein the first assembly includes:

a first compression chamber; and

a first sliding member, wherein:

at least a portion of the first sliding member is configured to remain within the first compression chamber; and

10

the first sliding member is configured to move in a first direction relative to the first compression chamber; and

a second assembly, wherein the second assembly includes: a second compression chamber; and

a second sliding member, wherein:

at least a portion of the second sliding member is configured to remain within the second compression chamber; and

the second sliding member is configured to move in a second direction relative to the second compression chamber;

wherein the first direction is opposite the second direction;

a third assembly, wherein the third assembly includes:

a third compression chamber; and

a third sliding member, wherein:

at least a portion of the third sliding member is configured to remain within the third compression chamber; and

the third sliding member is configured to move in the first direction relative to the third compression chamber;

a fourth assembly, wherein the fourth assembly includes:

a fourth compression chamber; and

a fourth sliding member, wherein:

at least a portion of the fourth sliding member is configured to remain within the fourth compression chamber; and

the fourth sliding member is configured to move in the second direction relative to the fourth compression chamber;

a first end link, wherein the first end link is configured to attach to the first sliding shaft and the third sliding shaft; and

a second end link, wherein the second end link is configured to attach to the second sliding shaft and the fourth sliding shaft;

wherein the combined distance that the first sliding member and the second sliding member are configured to move is greater than the length of the first compression chamber.

2. The fluid based shock absorber of claim 1, wherein the first direction is parallel to the second direction.

3. The fluid based shock absorber of claim 2, wherein the first direction is away from the first compression chamber.

4. The fluid based shock absorber of claim 3, wherein the second direction is away from the second compression chamber.

5. The fluid based shock absorber of claim 1, wherein the first assembly is adjacent to the second assembly.

6. The fluid based shock absorber of claim 1 further comprising a spring coil, wherein the spring coil wraps around at least a portion of the first sliding member.

7. The fluid based shock absorber of claim 1 further comprising a separating piston, wherein the separating piston is configured to divide the first compression chamber into:

a fluid chamber; and

a reserve gas chamber.

8. The fluid based shock absorber of claim 1 further comprising a damping assembly, wherein the damping assembly is attached to the end of the first sliding shaft within the first compression chamber.

9. A fluid based shock absorber, the fluid based shock absorber comprising:

a first assembly, wherein the first assembly includes:

a first compression chamber; and

a first sliding member, wherein:

11

at least a portion of the first sliding member is configured to remain within the first compression chamber; and
 the first sliding member is configured to move in a first direction relative to the first compression chamber; 5
 a second assembly, wherein the second assembly includes:
 a second compression chamber; and
 a second sliding member, wherein:
 at least a portion of the second sliding member is configured to remain within the second compression chamber; and 10
 the second sliding member is configured to move in a second direction relative to the second compression chamber;
 a third assembly, wherein the third assembly includes: 15
 a third compression chamber; and
 a third sliding member, wherein:
 at least a portion of the third sliding member is configured to remain within the third compression chamber; and 20
 the third sliding member is configured to move in the first direction relative to the third compression chamber;
 a fourth assembly, wherein the fourth assembly includes: 25
 a fourth compression chamber; and
 a fourth sliding member, wherein:
 at least a portion of the fourth sliding member is configured to remain within the fourth compression chamber; and 30
 the fourth sliding member is configured to move in the second direction relative to the fourth compression chamber;
 a first fluid channel, wherein the first fluid channel:
 connects the first compression chamber to the third compression chamber; and 35
 is configured to allow fluid to pass between the first compression chamber and the third compression chamber; and
 a second fluid channel, wherein the second fluid channel: 40
 connects the to the second compression chamber to the fourth compression chamber; and
 is configured to allow fluid to pass between the second compression chamber and the fourth compression chamber; 45
 a first end link, wherein the first end link is configured to attach to the first sliding shaft and the third sliding shaft; and
 a second end link, wherein the second end link is configured to attach to the second sliding shaft and the fourth sliding shaft; 50
 wherein the combined distance that the first sliding member and the second sliding member are configured to move is greater than the length of the first compression chamber. 55

10. The fluid based shock absorber of claim **9** further comprising:
 a second reservoir chamber, wherein the second reservoir chamber includes:
 a separating piston, wherein the separating piston is configured to divide the second reservoir chamber into: 60
 a reserve gas chamber; and
 a reserve fluid chamber.

11. The fluid based shock absorber of claim **10** further comprising: 65
 a first fluid channel, wherein the fluid channel:

12

connects the reserve fluid chamber of the first reservoir chamber to the first compression chamber; and
 is configured to allow fluid to pass between the reserve fluid chamber of the first reservoir chamber and the first compression chamber; and
 a second fluid channel, wherein the fluid channel:
 connects the reserve fluid chamber of the second reservoir chamber to the second compression chamber; and
 is configured to allow fluid to pass between the reserve fluid chamber of the second reservoir chamber and the second compression chamber.

12. The fluid based shock absorber of claim **11** further comprising:
 a third assembly, wherein the third assembly includes:
 a third compression chamber; and
 a third sliding member, wherein:
 at least a portion of the third sliding member is configured to remain within the third compression chamber; and
 the third sliding member is configured to move in the first direction relative to the third compression chamber;
 wherein the first fluid channel:
 connects the reserve fluid chamber of the first reservoir chamber to the third compression chamber; and
 is configured to allow fluid to pass between the reserve fluid chamber of the first reservoir chamber and the third compression chamber.

13. The fluid based shock absorber of claim **12** further comprising:
 a fourth assembly, wherein the fourth assembly includes:
 a fourth compression chamber; and
 a fourth sliding member, wherein:
 at least a portion of the fourth sliding member is configured to remain within the fourth compression chamber; and
 the fourth sliding member is configured to move in the second direction relative to the fourth compression chamber;
 wherein the second fluid channel:
 connects the reserve fluid chamber of the second reservoir chamber to the fourth compression chamber; and
 is configured to allow fluid to pass between the reserve fluid chamber of the second reservoir chamber and the fourth compression chamber.

14. A fluid based shock absorber, the fluid based shock absorber comprising:
 a first assembly, wherein the first assembly includes:
 a first compression chamber; and
 a first sliding member, wherein:
 at least a portion of the first sliding member is configured to remain within the first compression chamber; and
 the first sliding member is configured to move in a first direction relative to the first compression chamber;
 a second assembly, wherein the second assembly includes:
 a second compression chamber; and
 a second sliding member, wherein:
 at least a portion of the second sliding member is configured to remain within the second compression chamber; and
 the second sliding member is configured to move in a second direction relative to the second compression chamber;
 a third assembly, wherein the third assembly includes:
 a third compression chamber; and

13

a third sliding member, wherein:
 at least a portion of the third sliding member is configured to remain within the third compression chamber; and
 the third sliding member is configured to move in the first direction relative to the third compression chamber; 5
 a fourth assembly, wherein the fourth assembly includes:
 a fourth compression chamber; and 10
 a fourth sliding member, wherein:
 at least a portion of the fourth sliding member is configured to remain within the fourth compression chamber; and
 the fourth sliding member is configured to move in the second direction relative to the fourth compression chamber; 15
 a first reservoir chamber, wherein the first reservoir chamber includes:
 a separating piston, wherein the separating piston is configured to divide the first reservoir chamber into: 20
 a reserve gas chamber; and
 a reserve fluid chamber;
 a second reservoir chamber, wherein the second reservoir chamber includes:
 a separating piston, wherein the separating piston is configured to divide the second reservoir chamber into: 25
 a reserve gas chamber; and
 a reserve fluid chamber;
 a first fluid channel, wherein the first fluid channel:

14

connects the reserve fluid chamber of the first reservoir chamber to the first compression chamber and to the third compression chamber; and
 is configured to allow fluid to pass between the reserve fluid chamber of the first reservoir chamber, the first compression chamber and the third compression chamber;
 a second fluid channel, wherein the second fluid channel:
 connects the reserve fluid chamber of the second reservoir chamber to the second compression chamber and to the fourth compression chamber; and
 is configured to allow fluid to pass between the reserve fluid chamber of the second reservoir chamber, the second compression chamber and the fourth compression chamber
 a first end link, wherein the first end link is configured to attach to the first sliding shaft and the third sliding shaft; and
 a second end link, wherein the second end link is configured to attach to the second sliding shaft and the fourth sliding shaft.
15. The fluid based shock absorber of claim **14** further comprising:
 a first attachment, wherein the first attachment is configured to connect the first end link to an external device; and
 a second attachment, wherein the second attachment is configured to connect the second end link to the external device.

* * * * *