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(54) **POWER BOOST REGULATOR**

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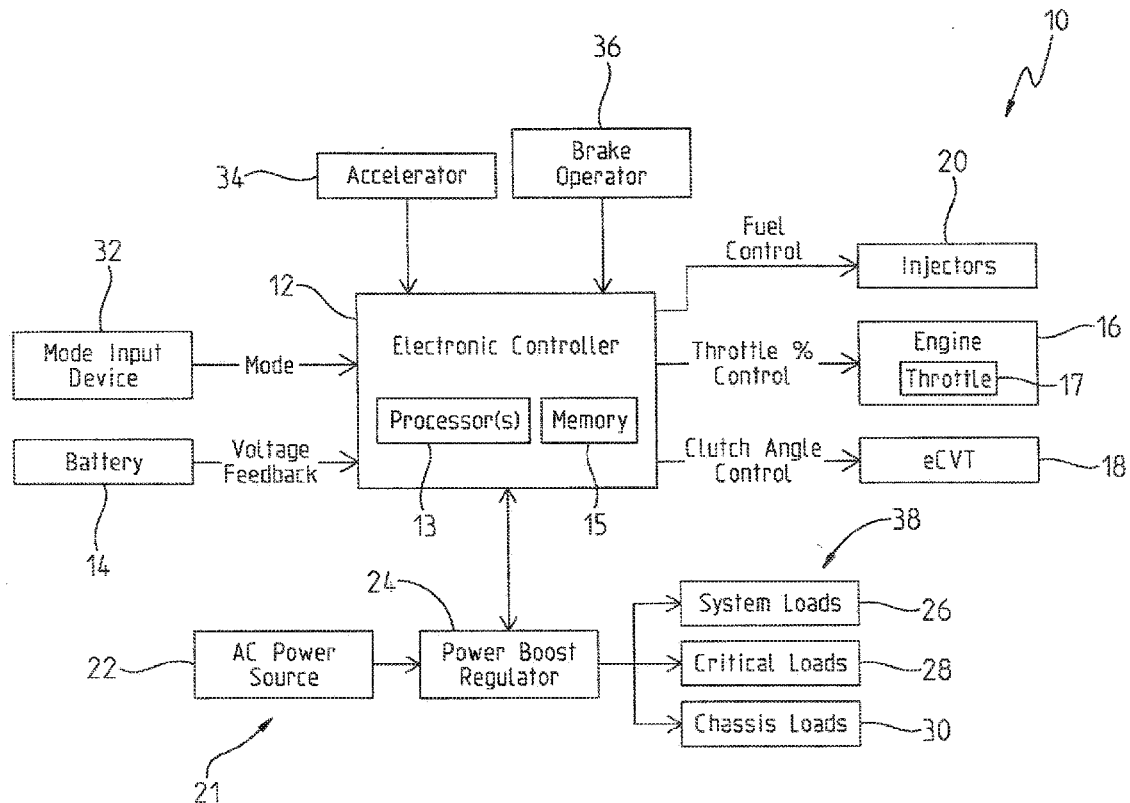
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(2013.01); **B60L 11/08** (2013.01)

(57)

ABSTRACT

A power generation system is provided including a power
boost regulator operative to provide load matched voltage
operation of an AC power source.



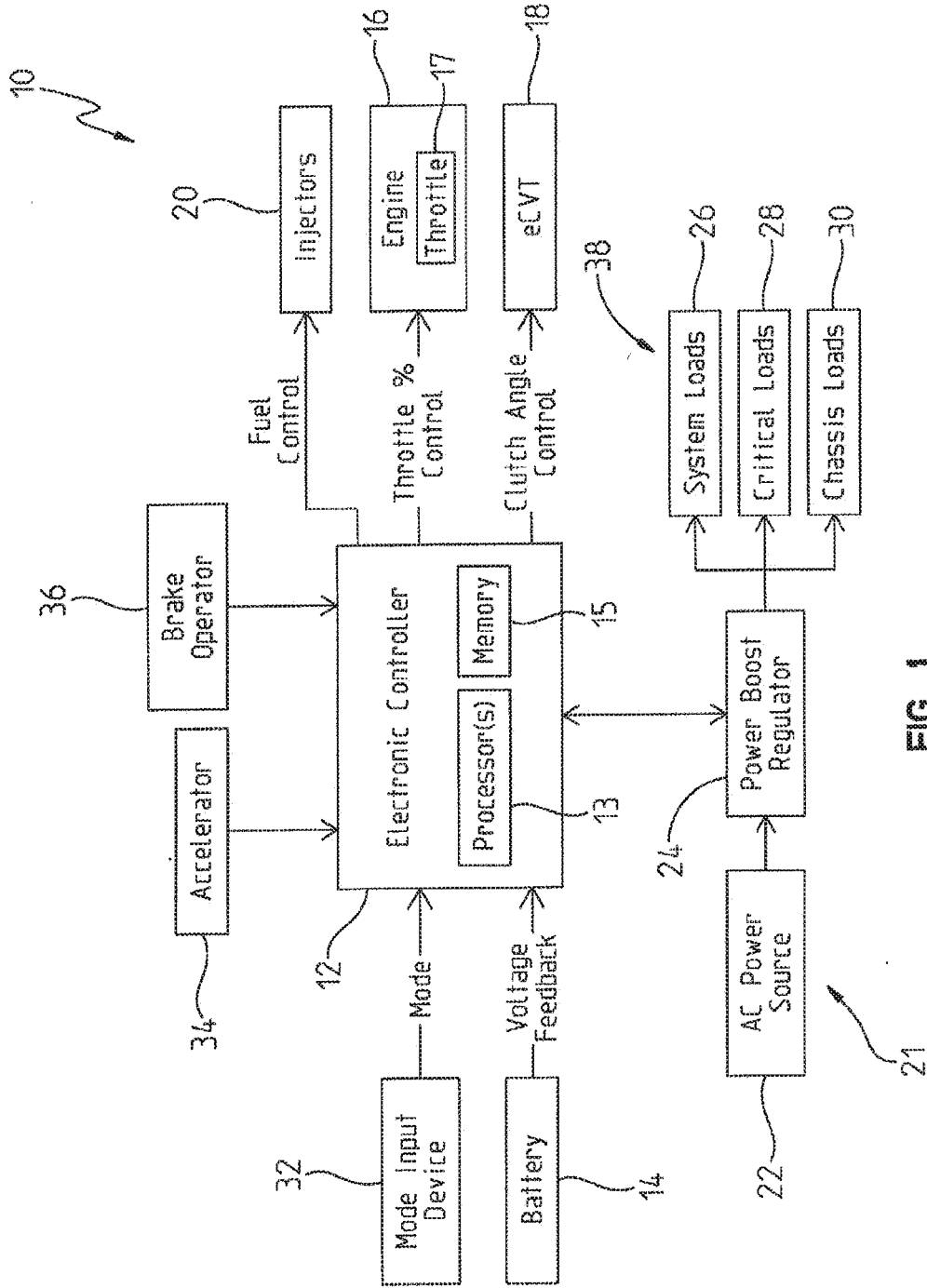
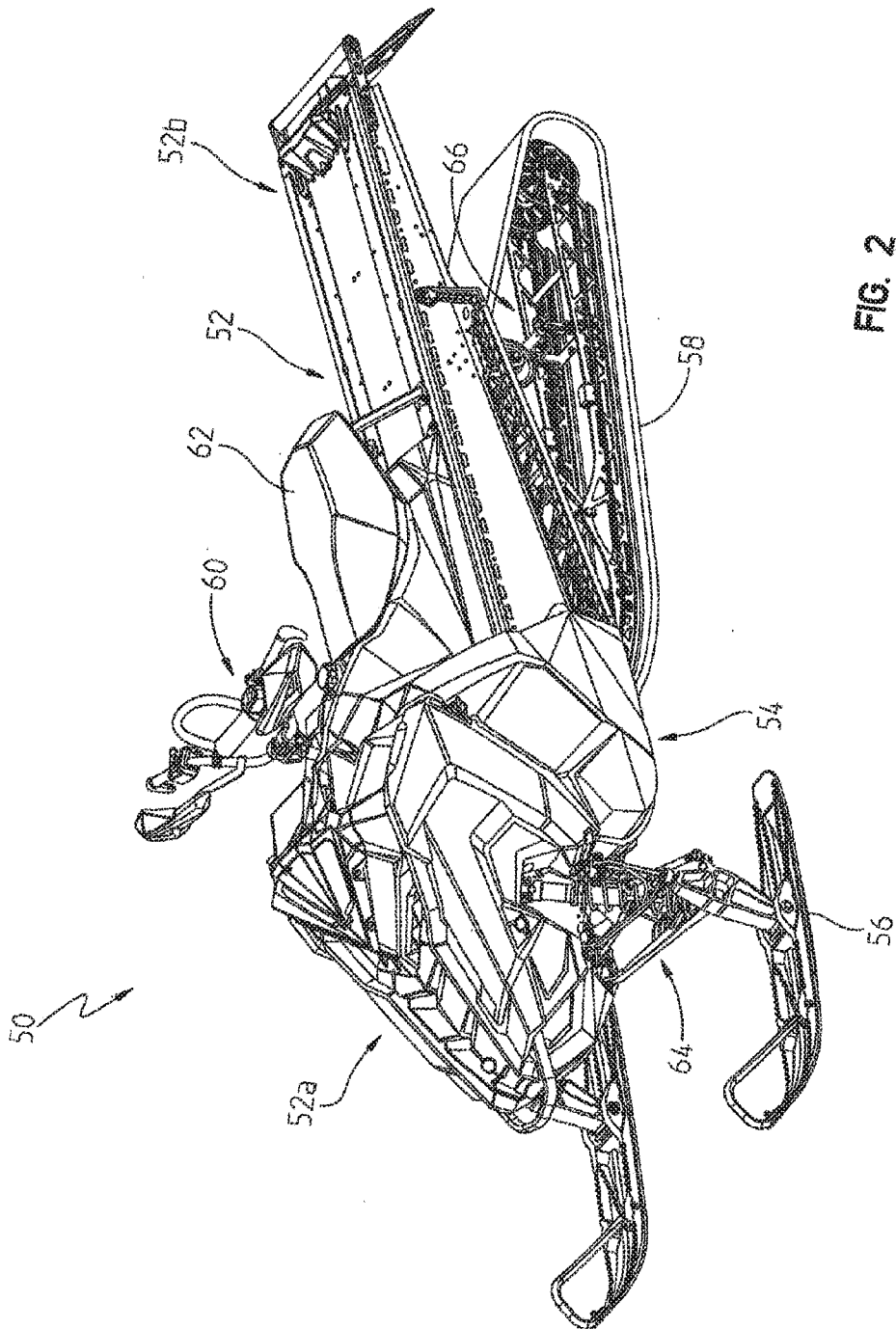


FIG. 1



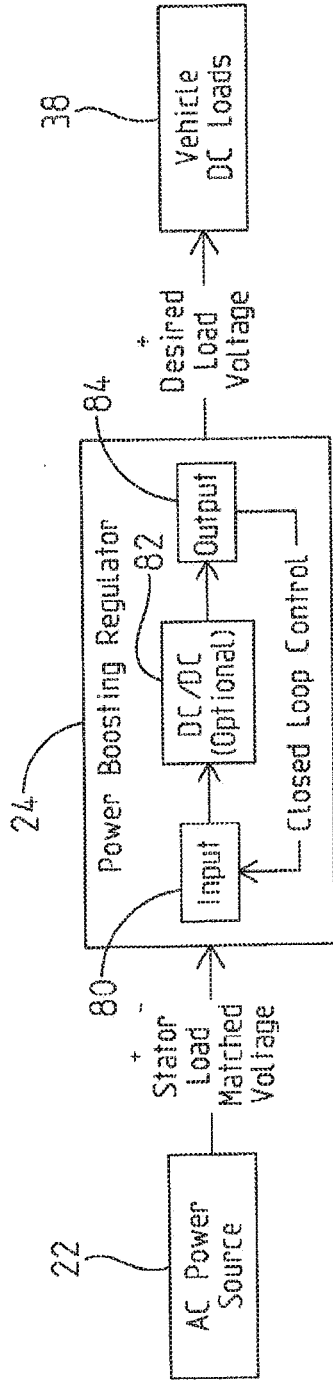


FIG. 3

70

Power Stages Config.	Input	DC/DC	Output
Boost	Boost Rectifier	No DC/DC Converter	Current Steering
Boost Buck, Tilt: Low Heat Gen. In Stator	Boost Rectifier	Step Down Converter	Current Steering
Boost Interleaved Buck	Boost Rectifier	Interleaved Buck Converter	Single Output From DC/DC

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FIG. 4

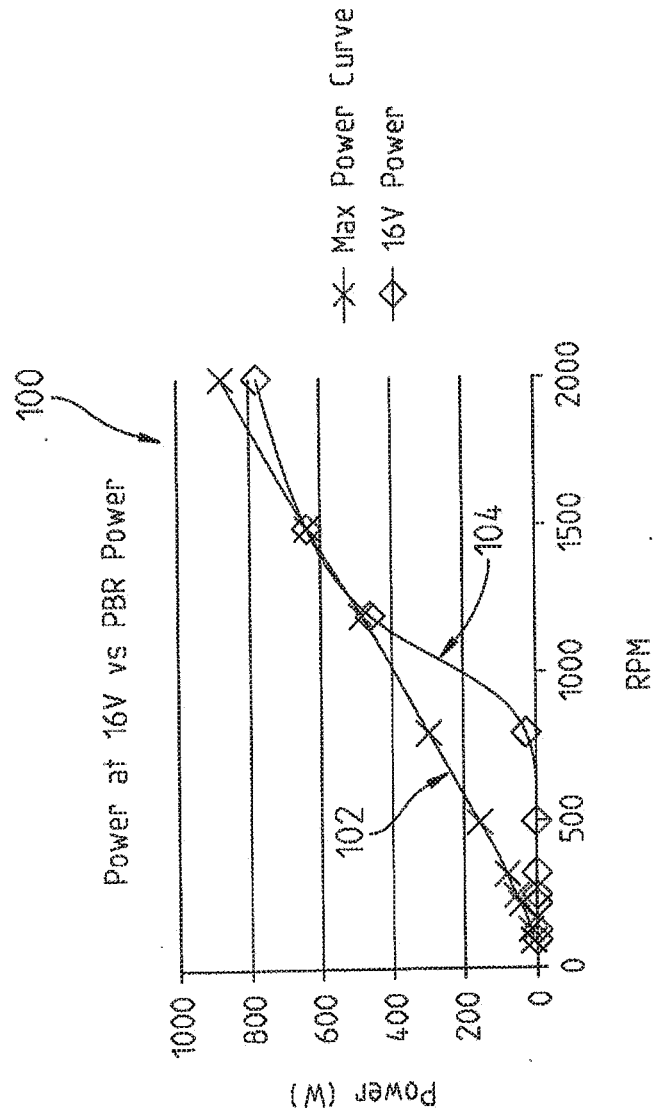


FIG. 5

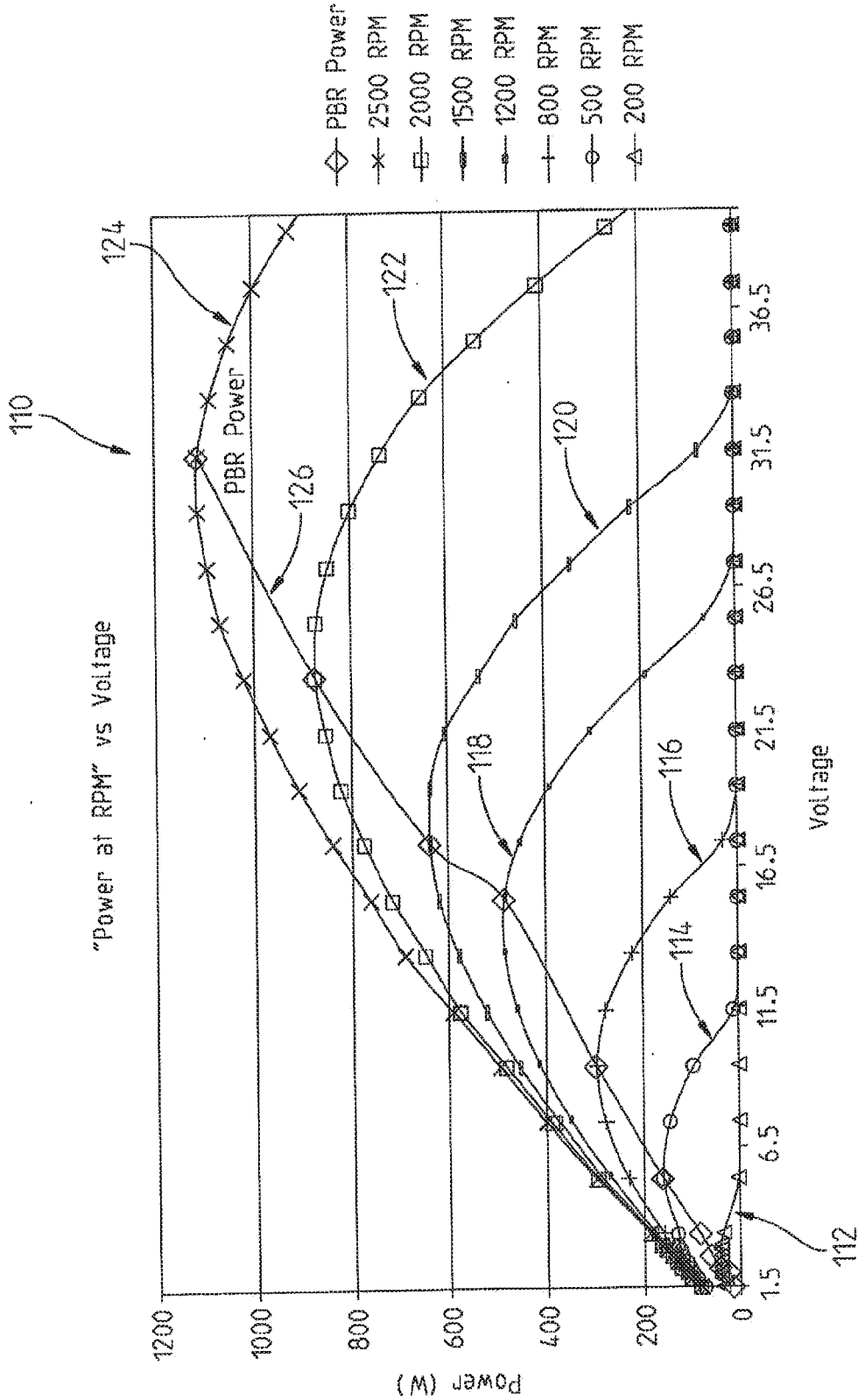


FIG. 6

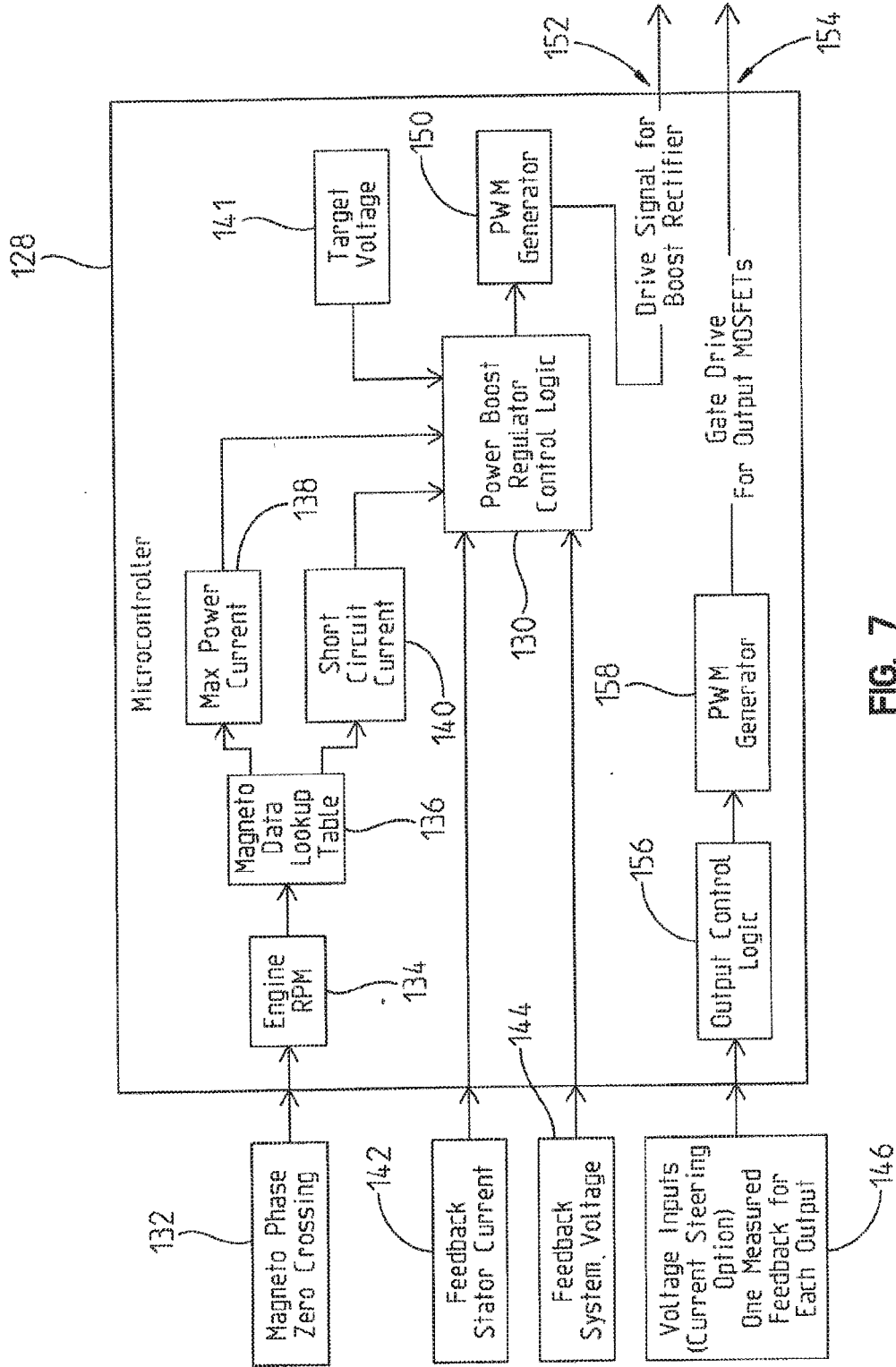


FIG. 7

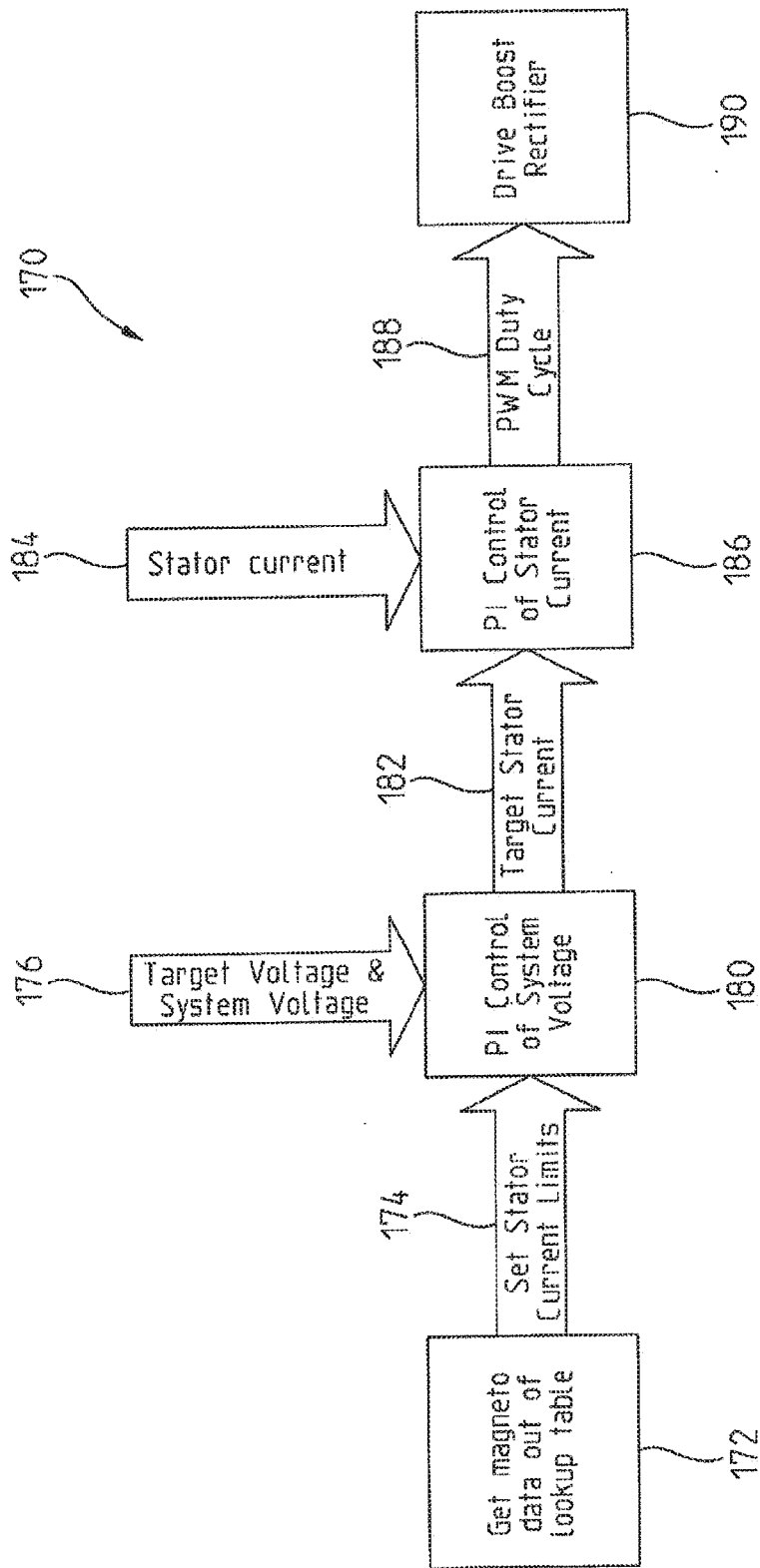


FIG. 8

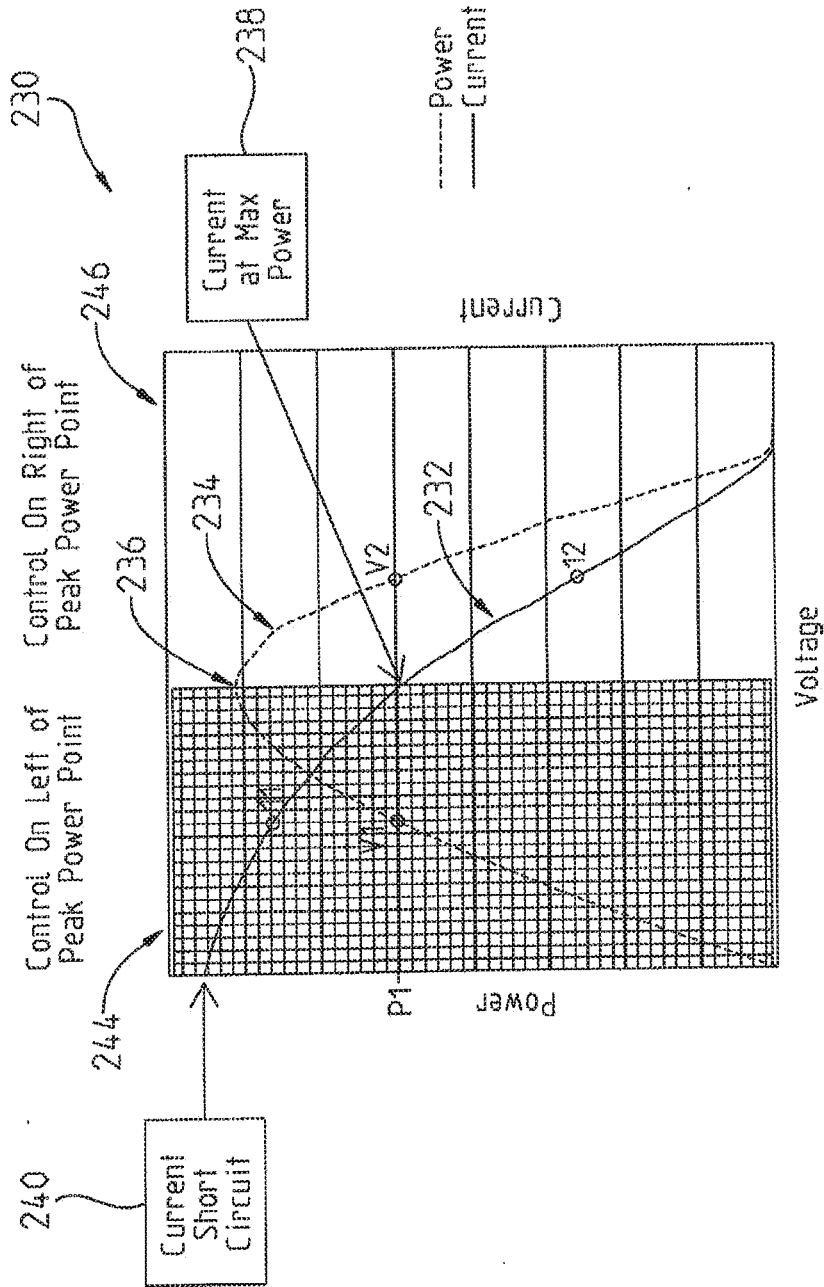


FIG. 10

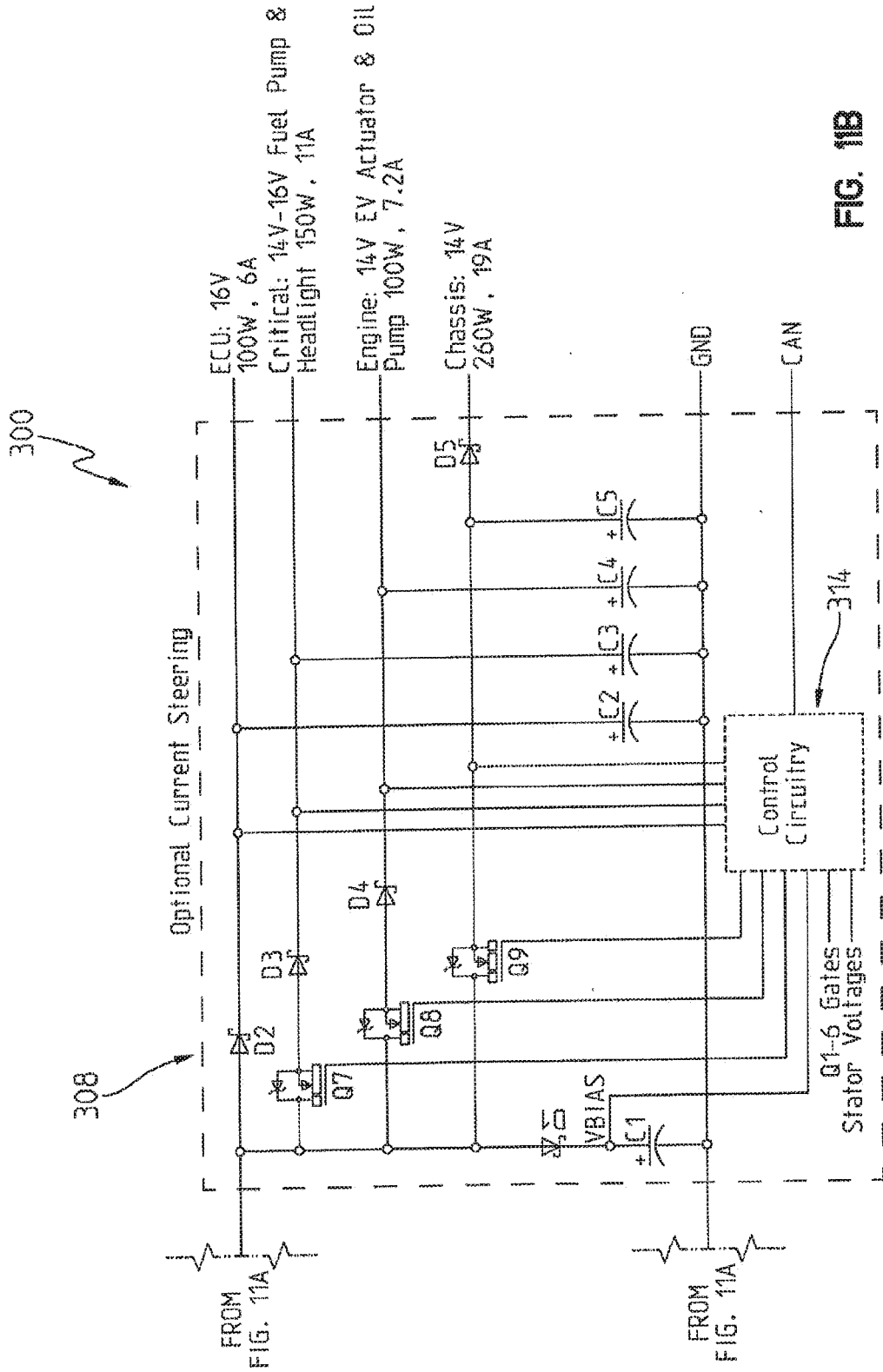


FIG. 11B

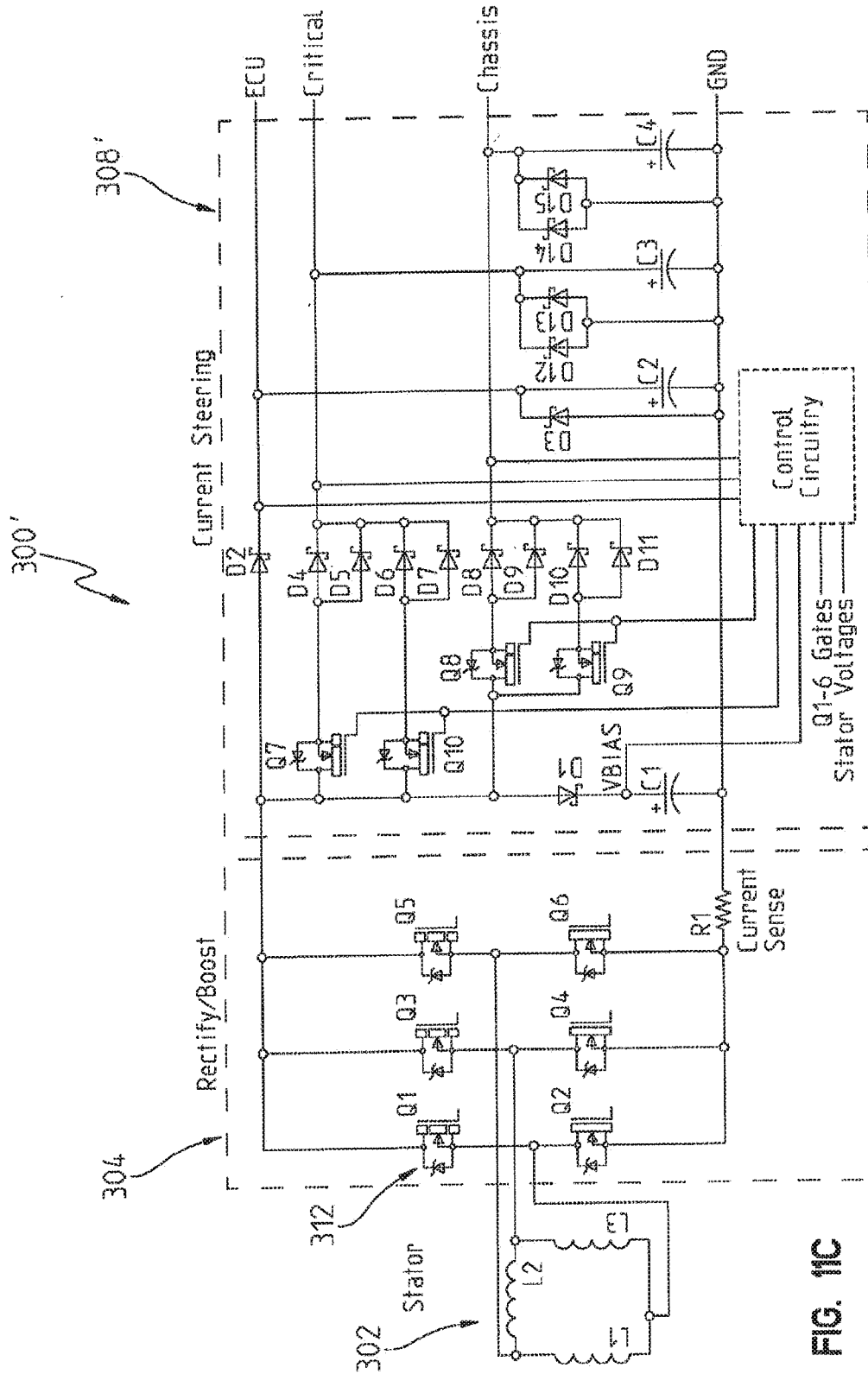


FIG. 11C

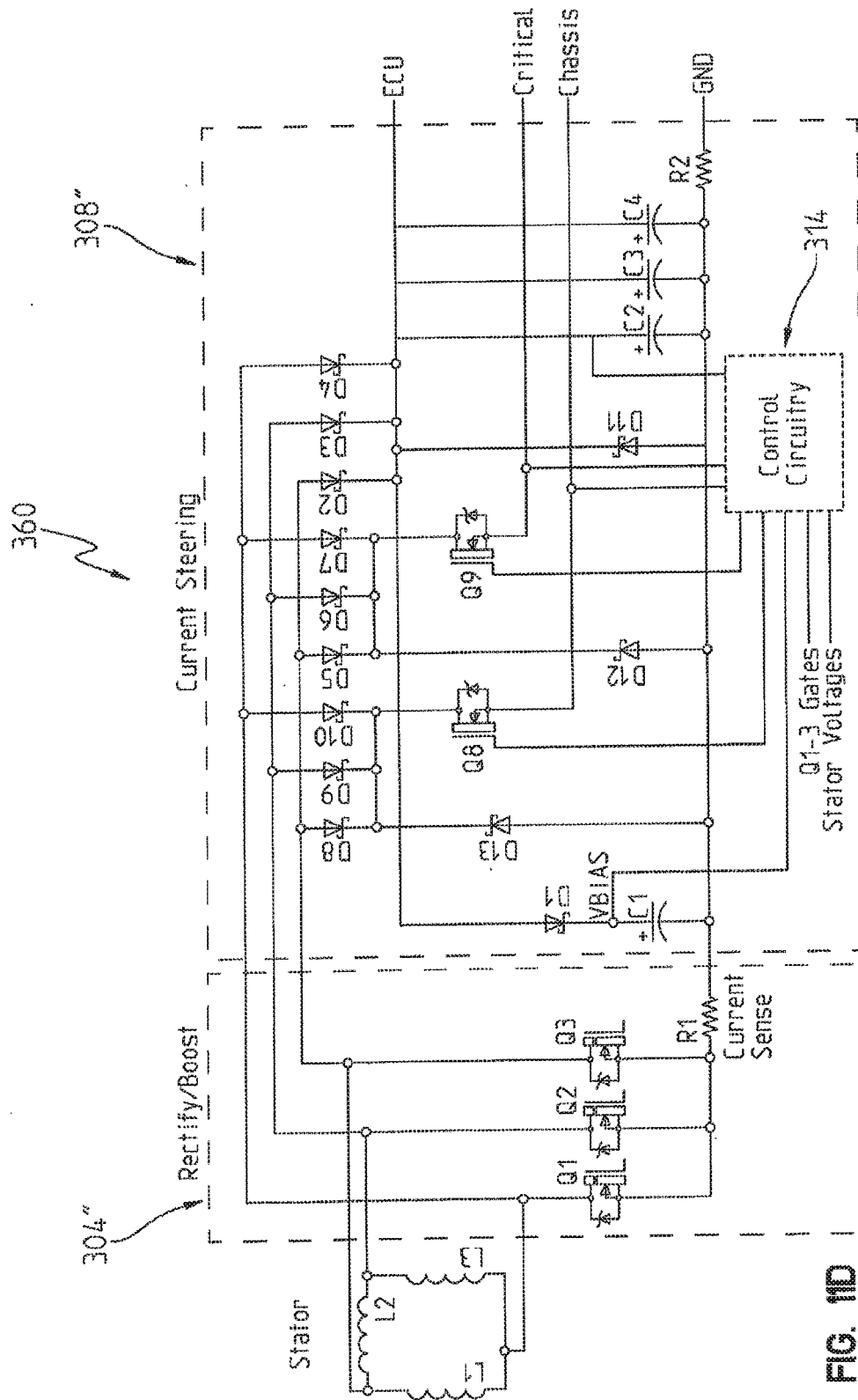


FIG. 11D

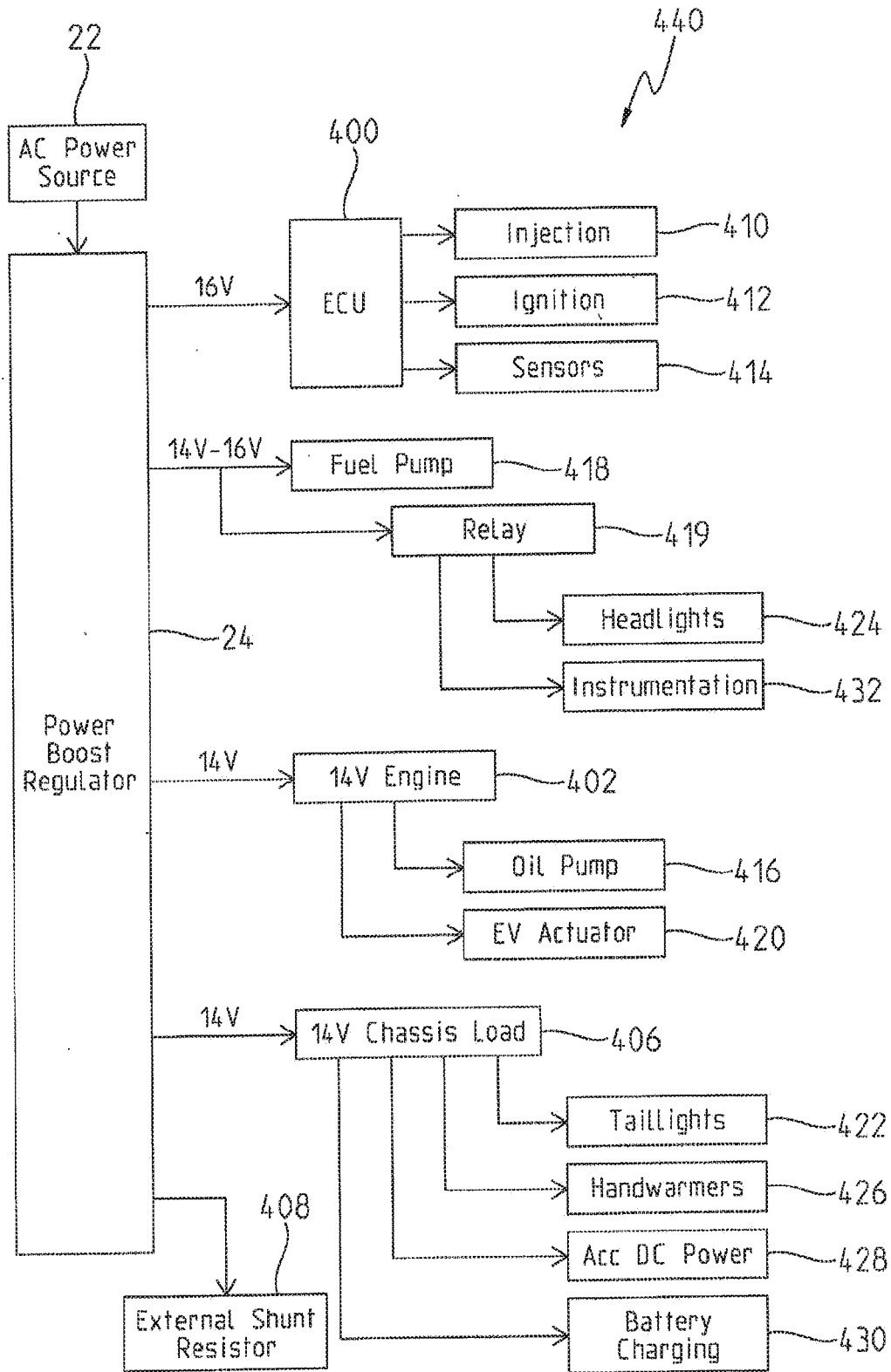


FIG. 12

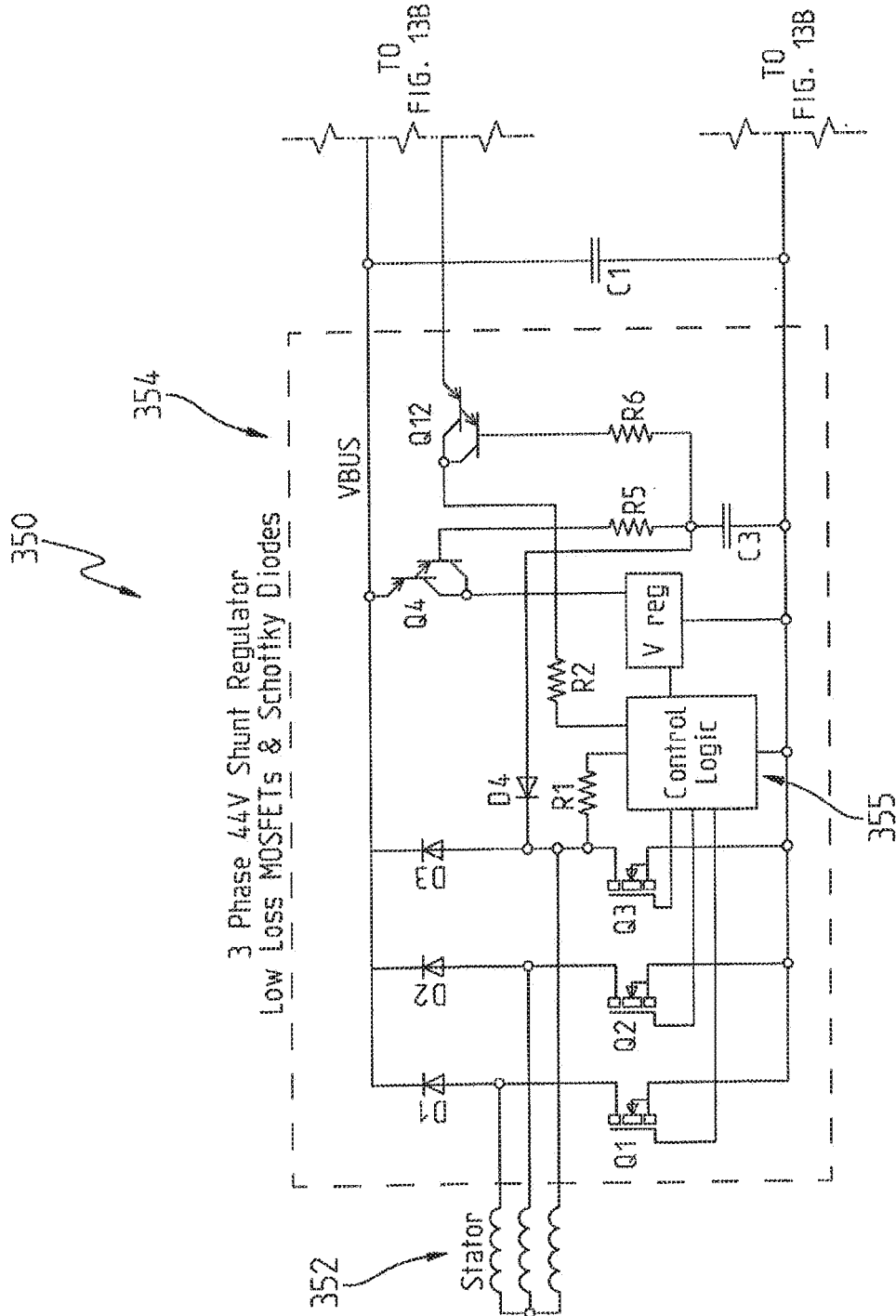


FIG. 13A

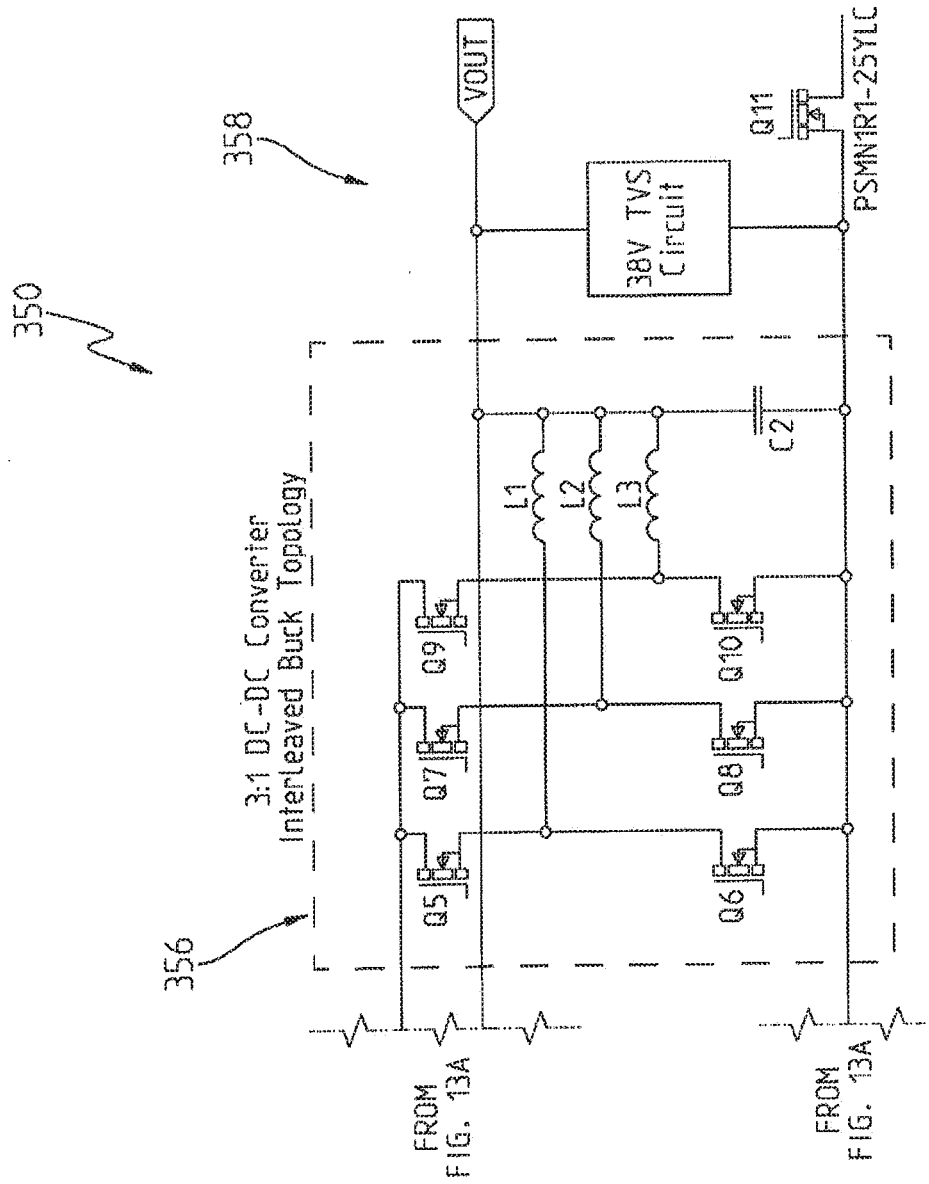


FIG. 13B

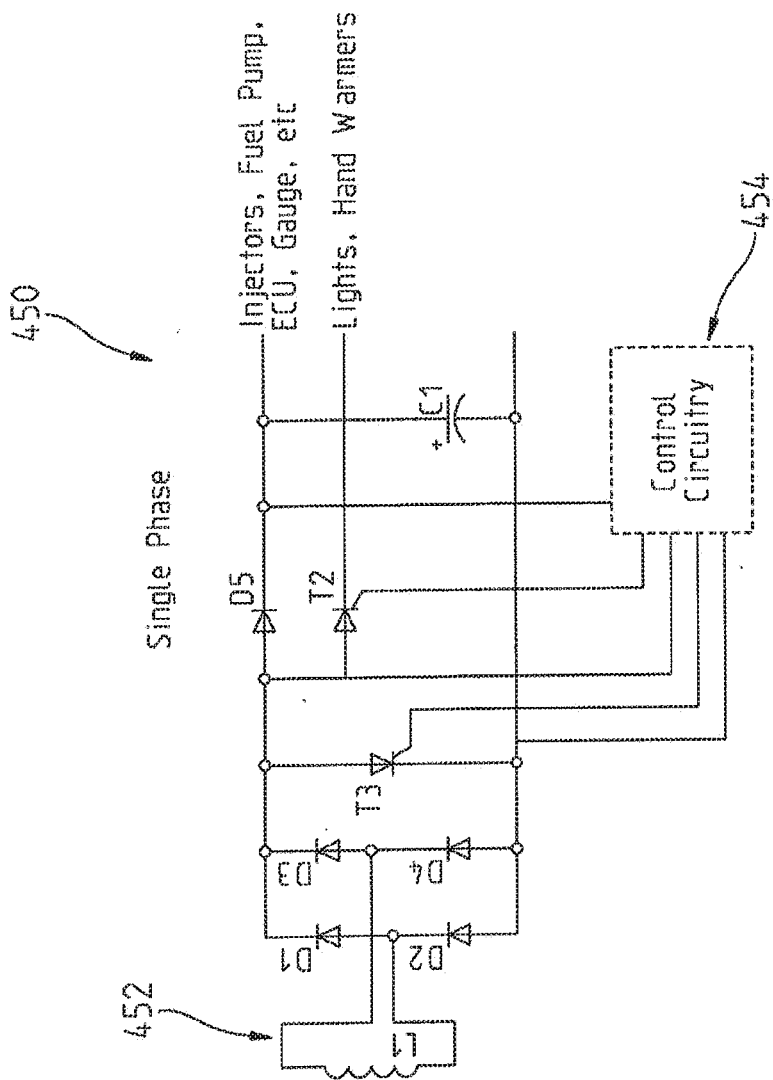


FIG. 14

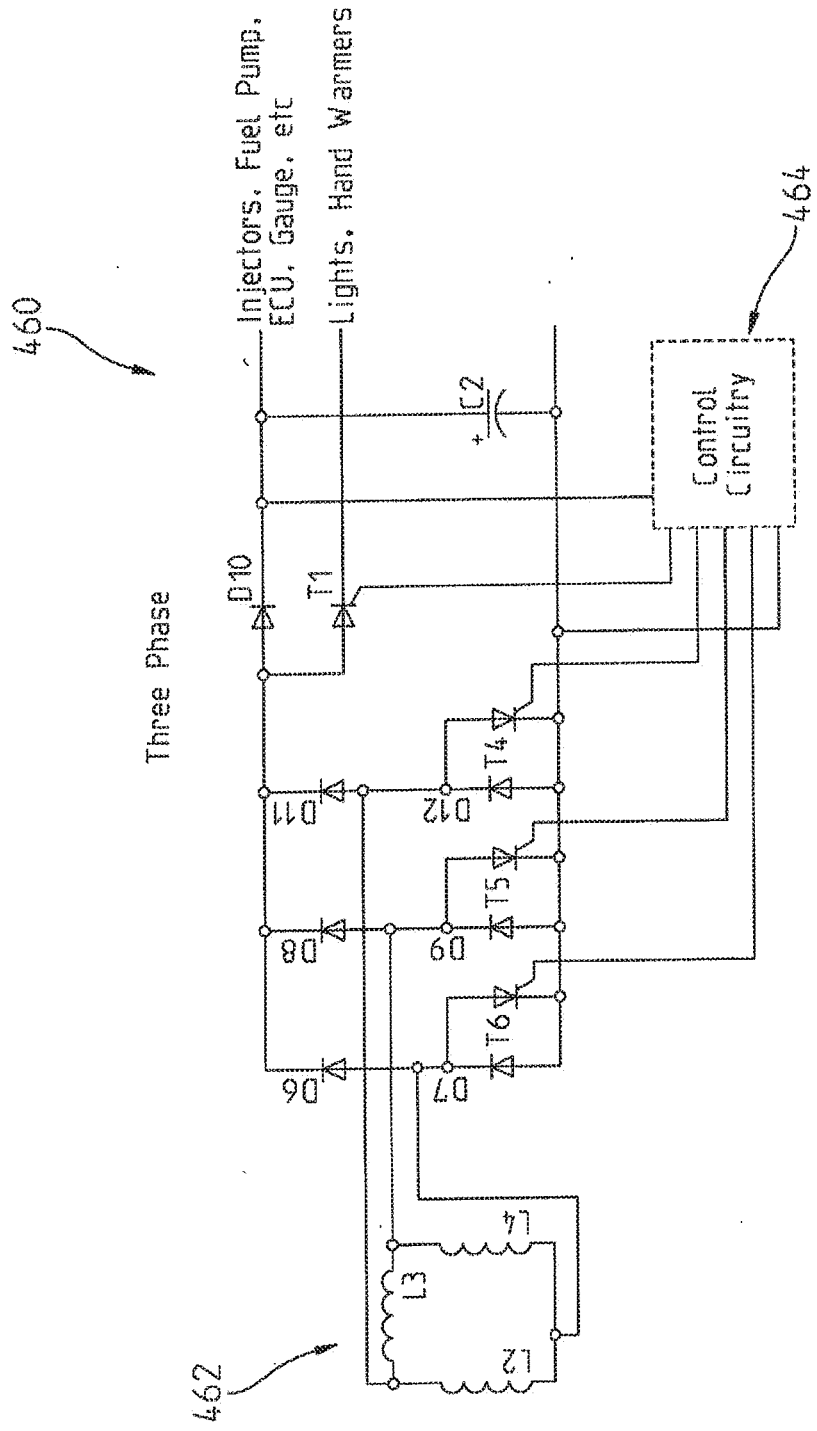


FIG. 15

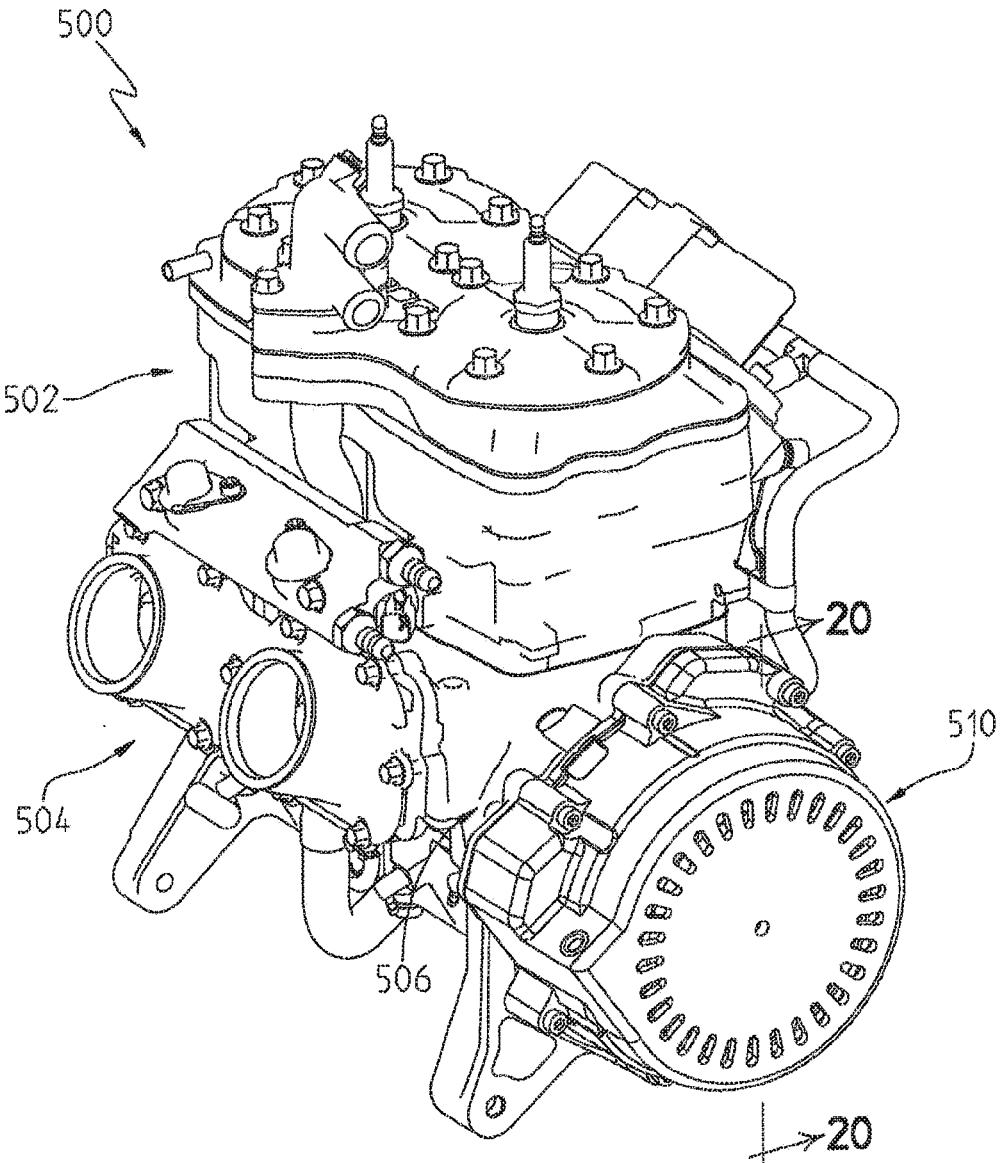


FIG. 17

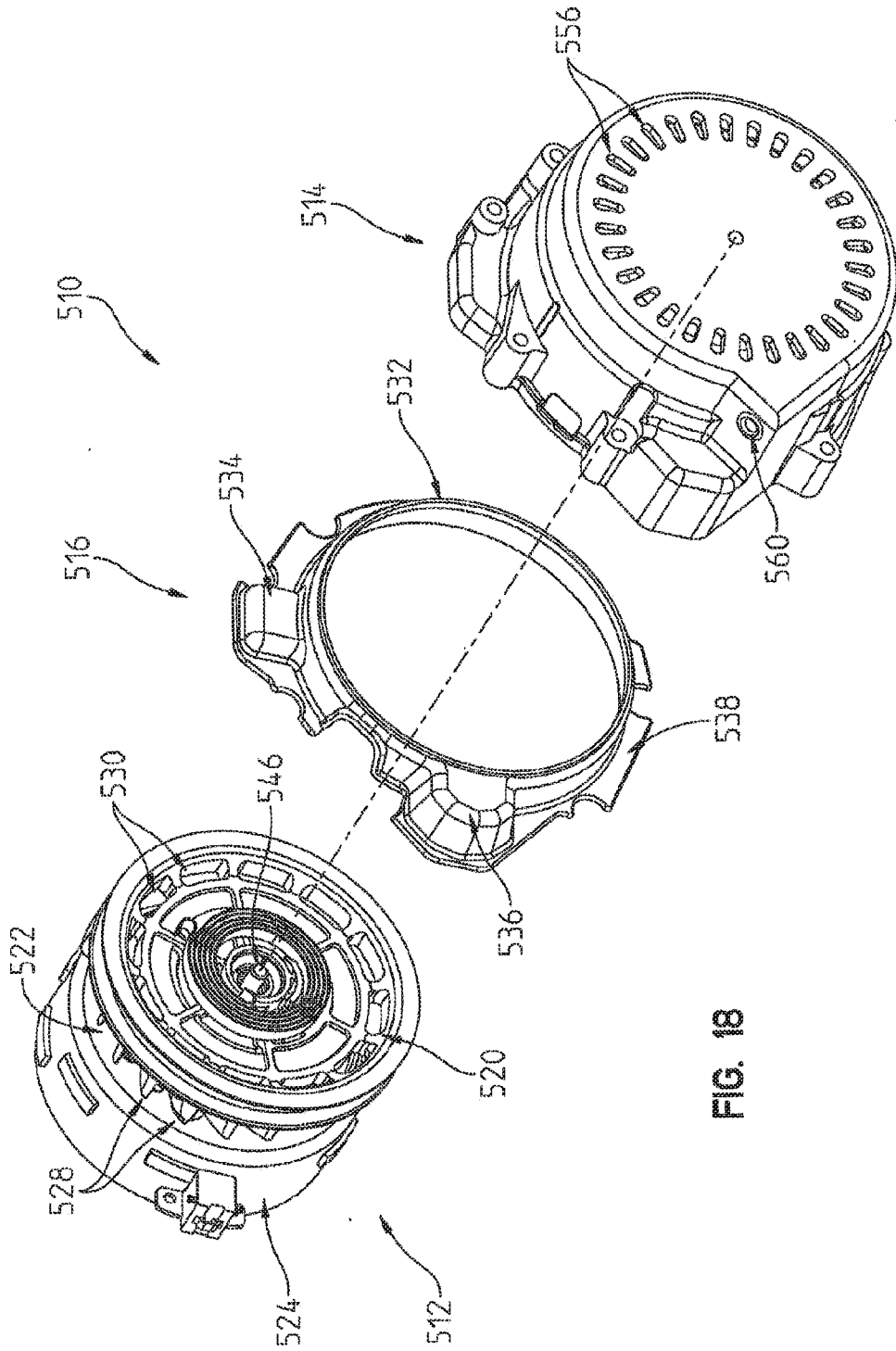


FIG. 18

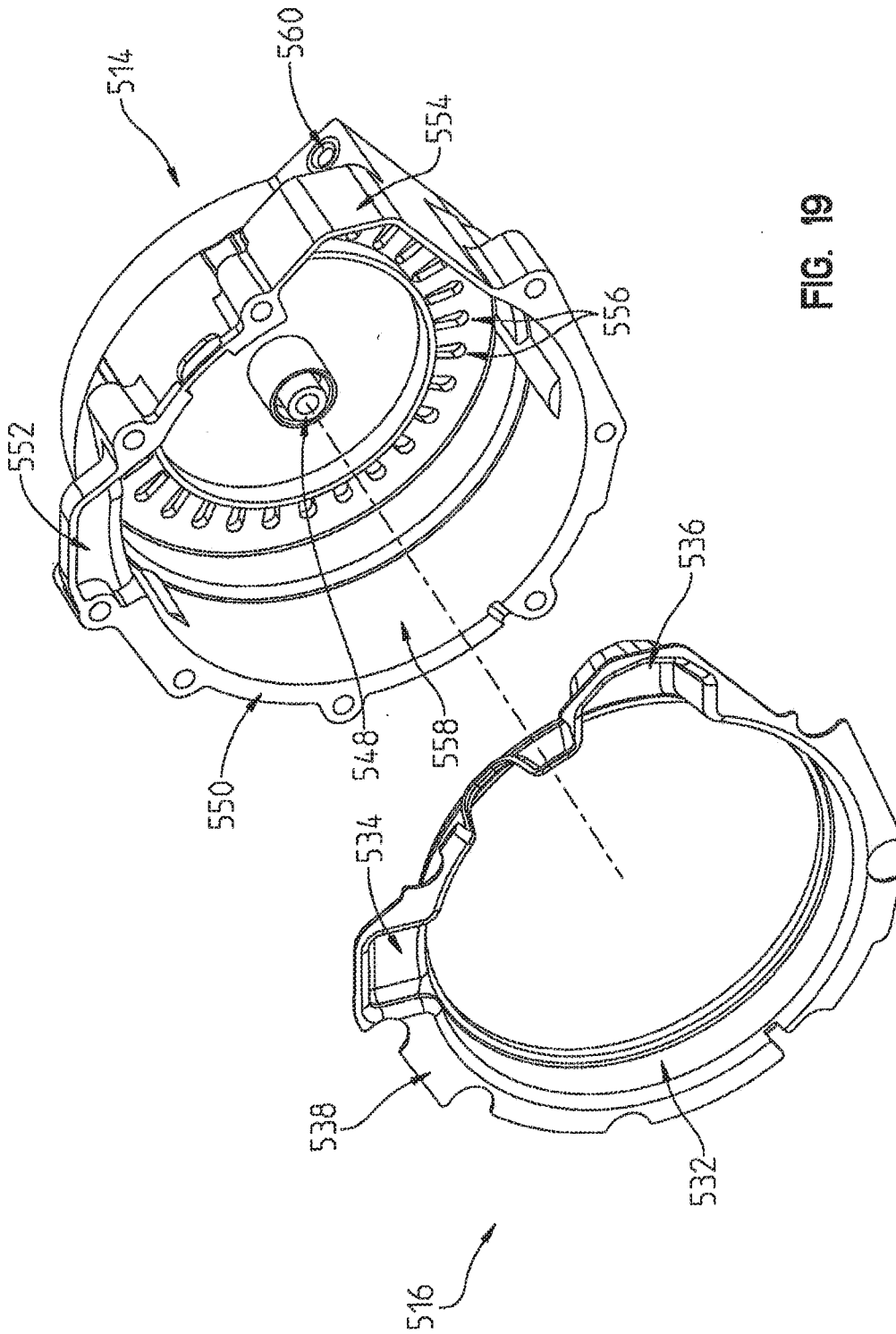


FIG. 19

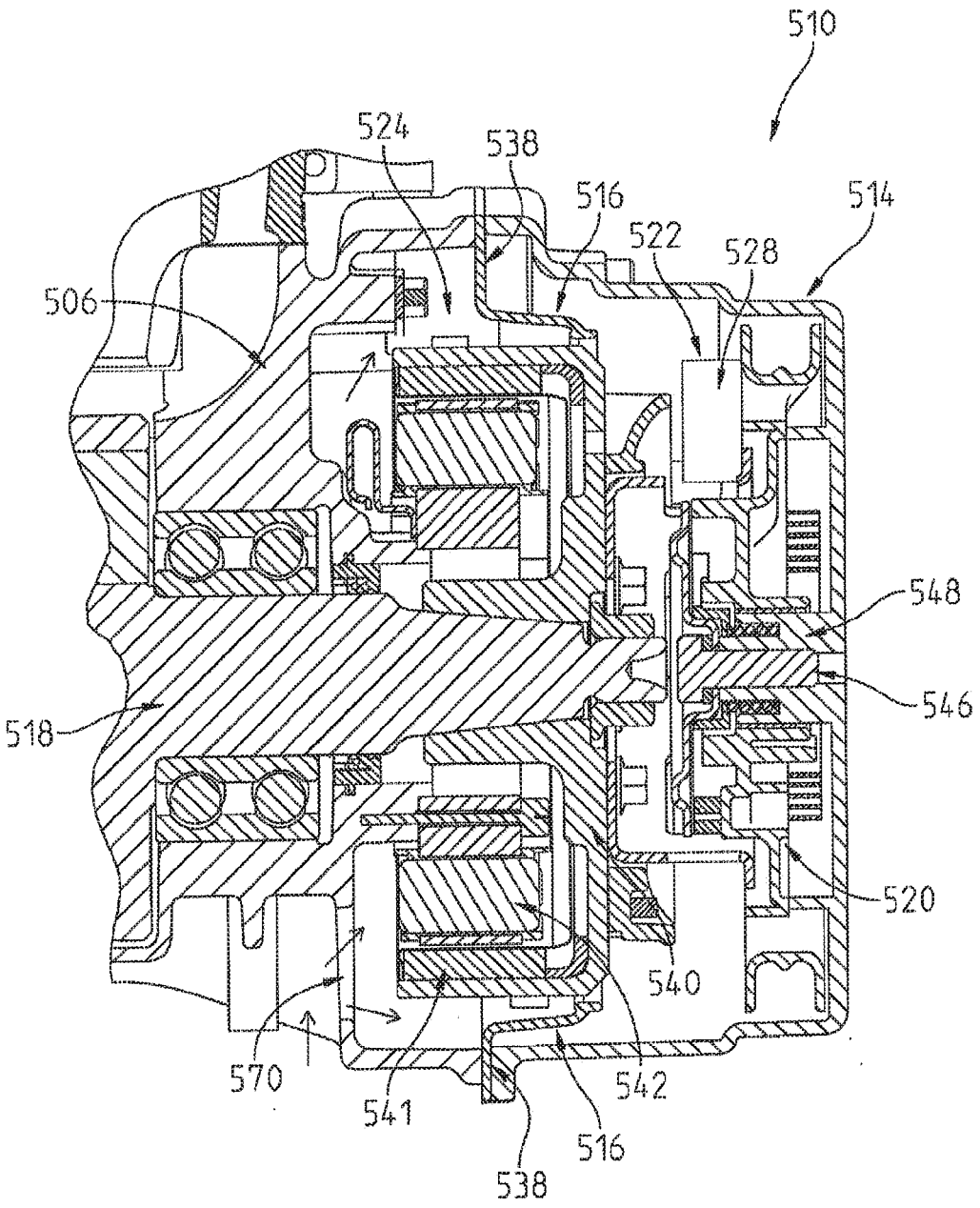


FIG. 20

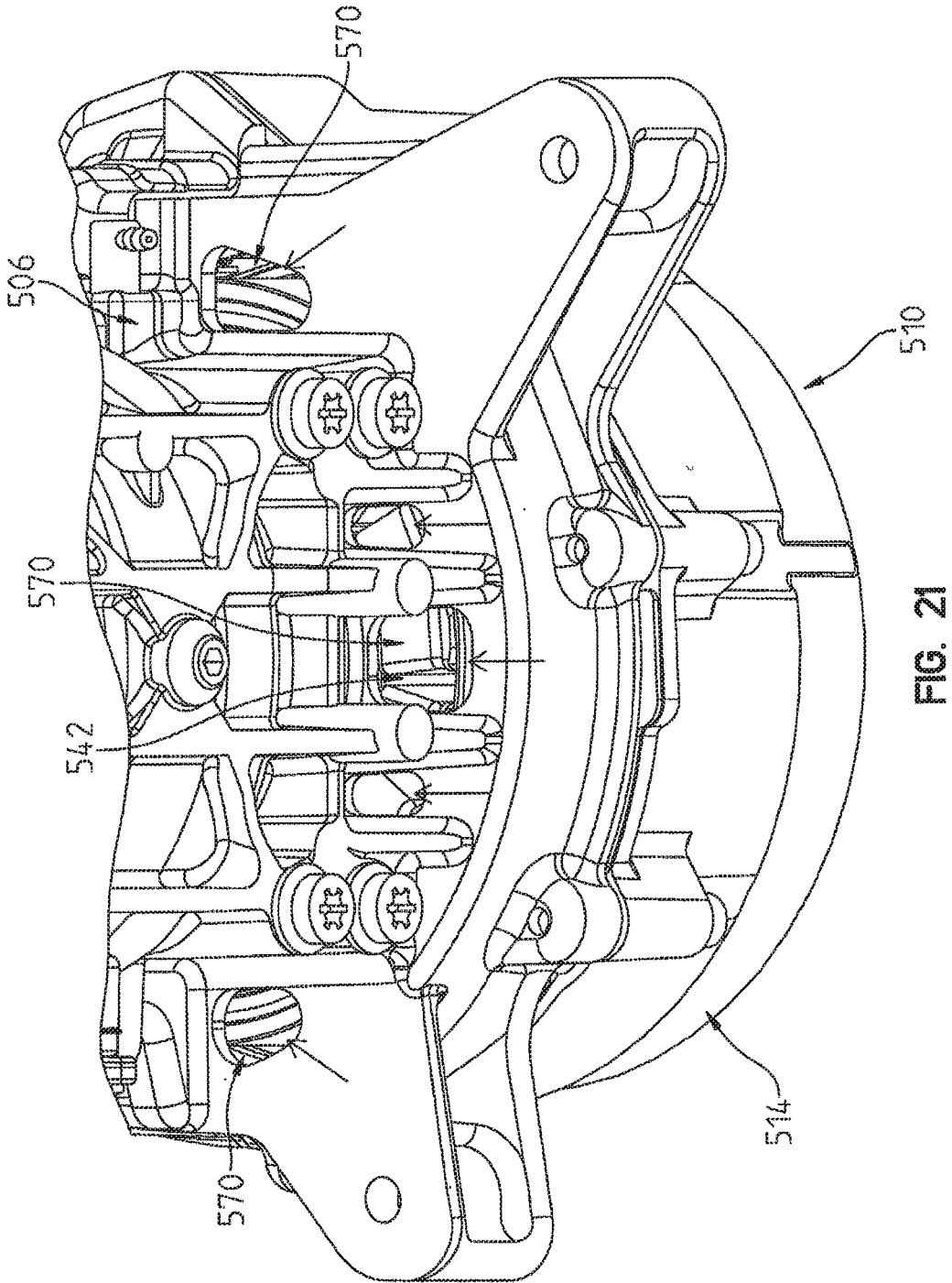
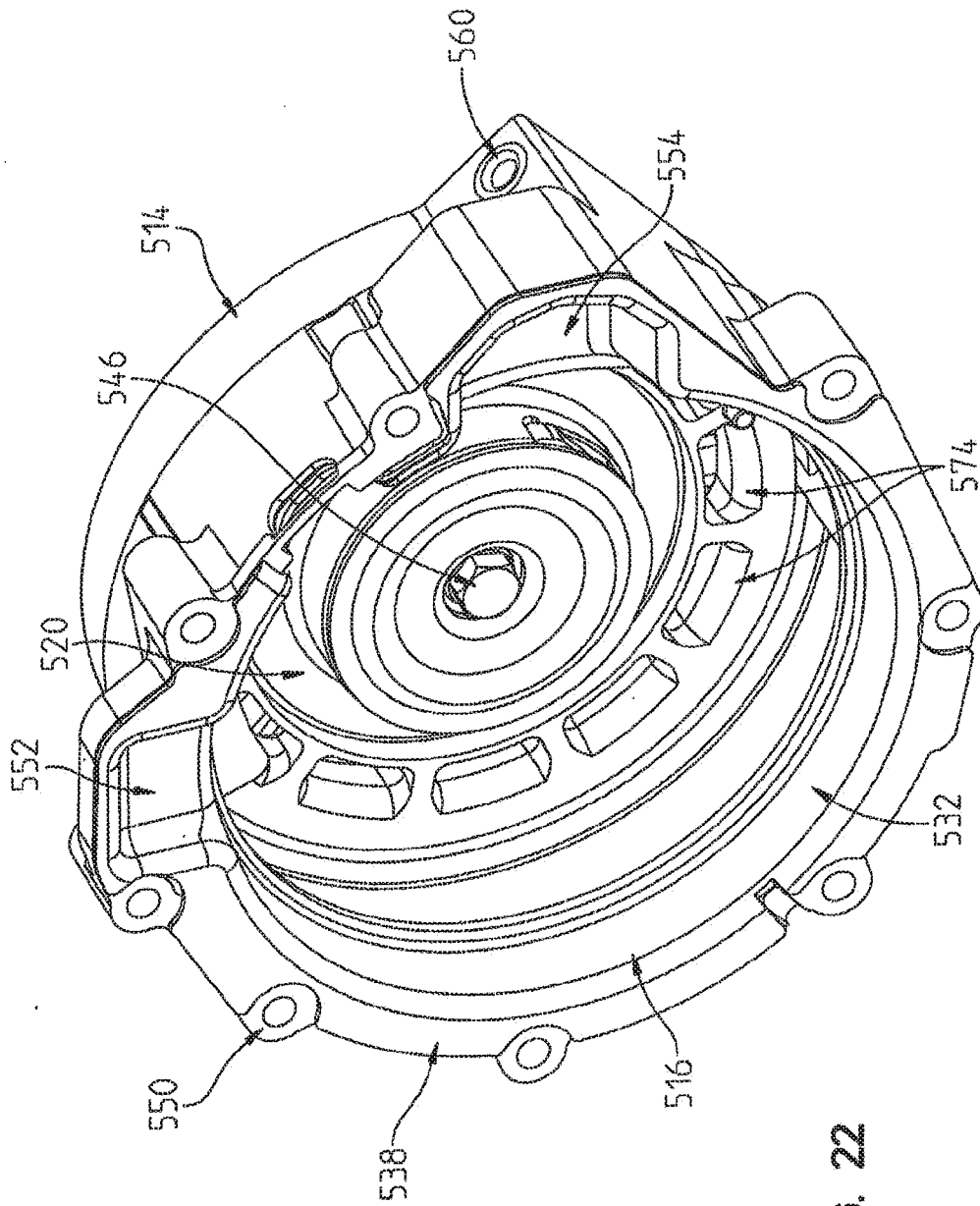


FIG. 21



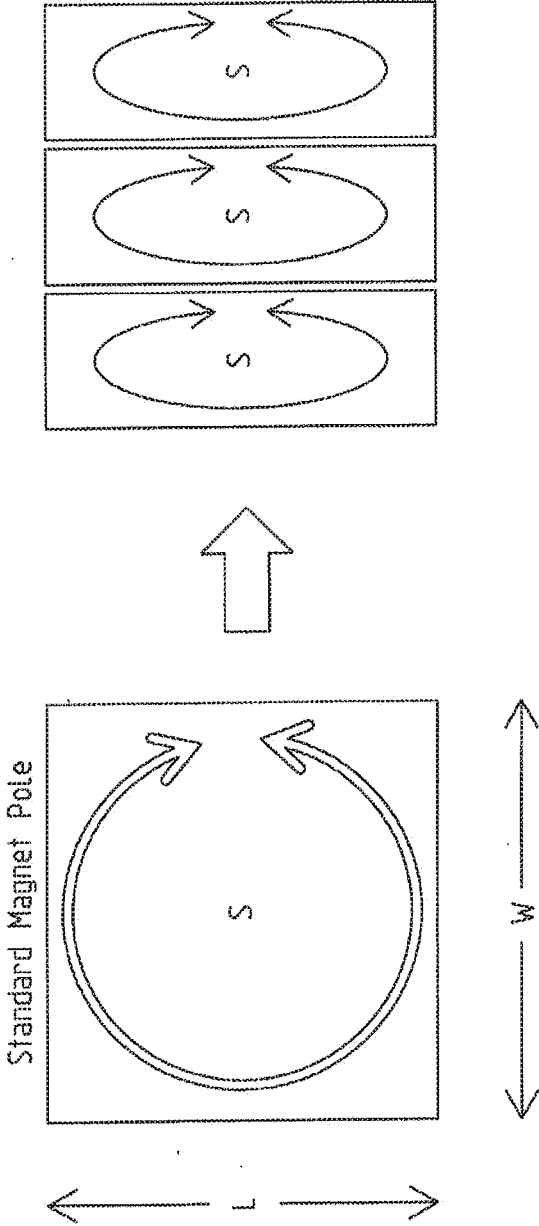


FIG. 23B

FIG. 23A

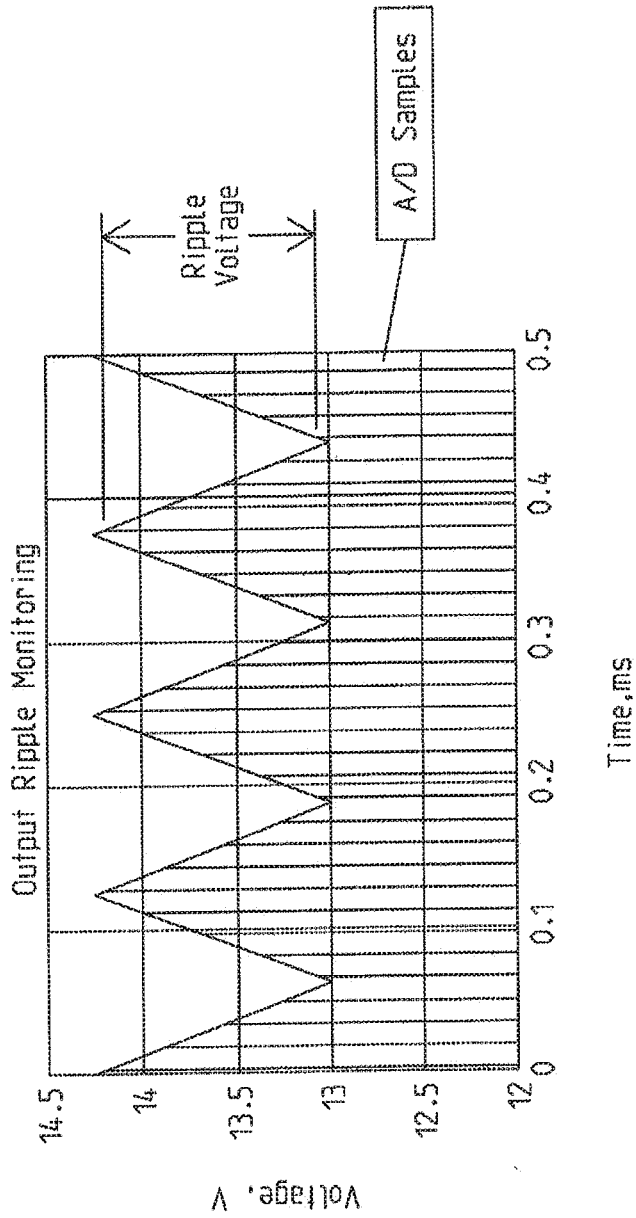


FIG. 24

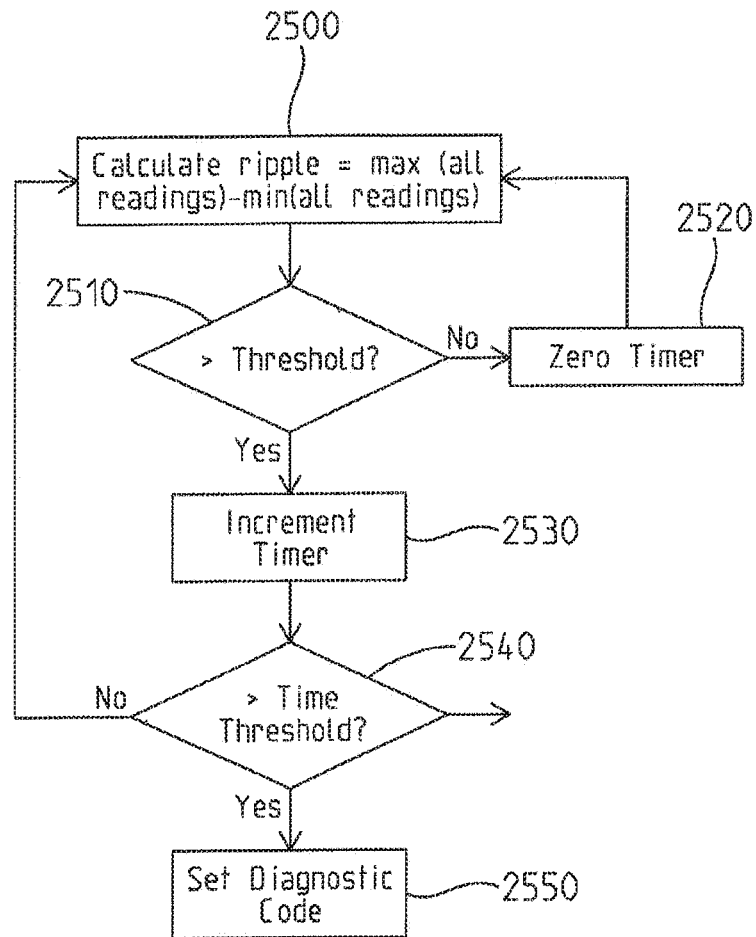


FIG. 25

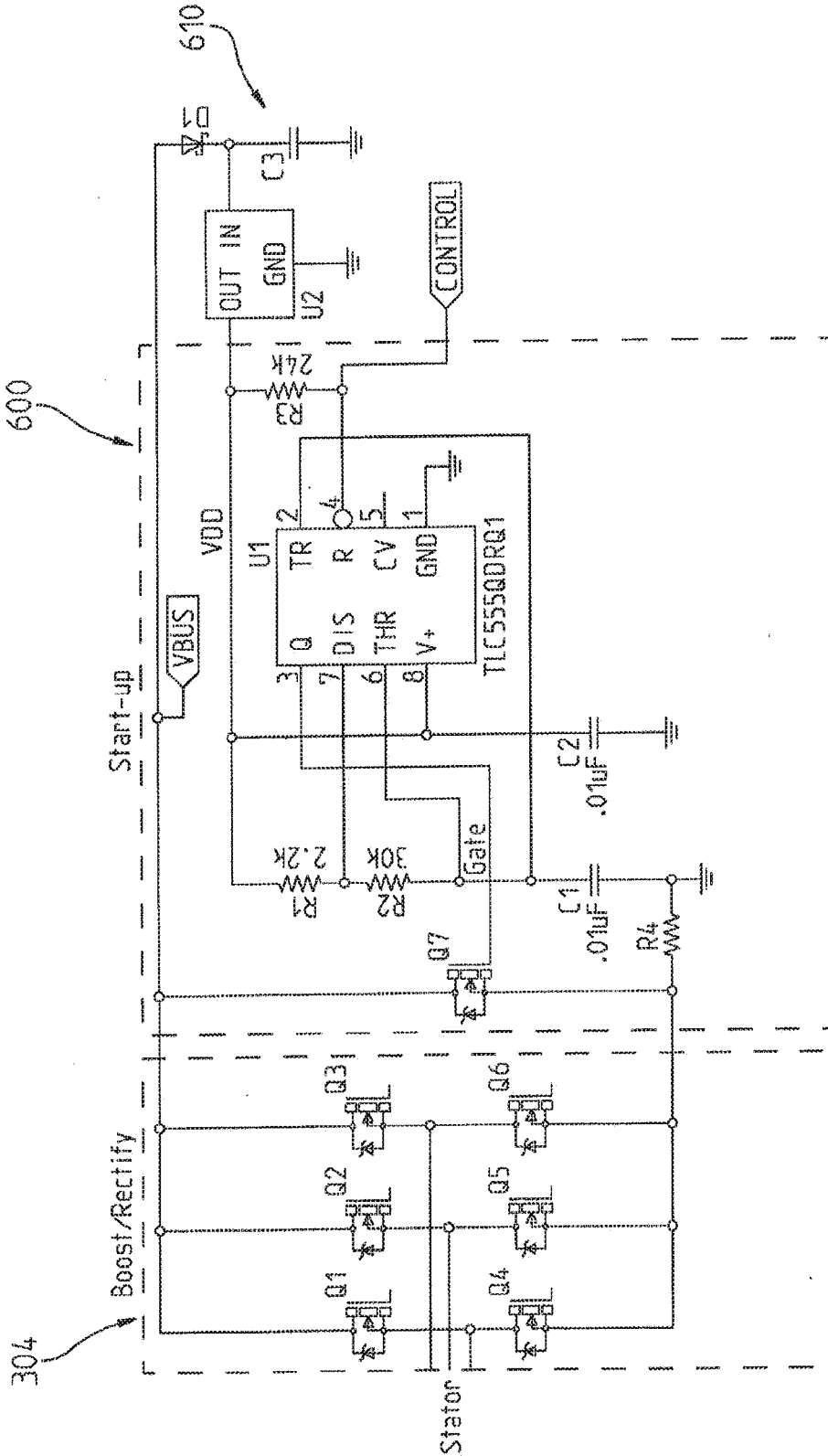


FIG. 26

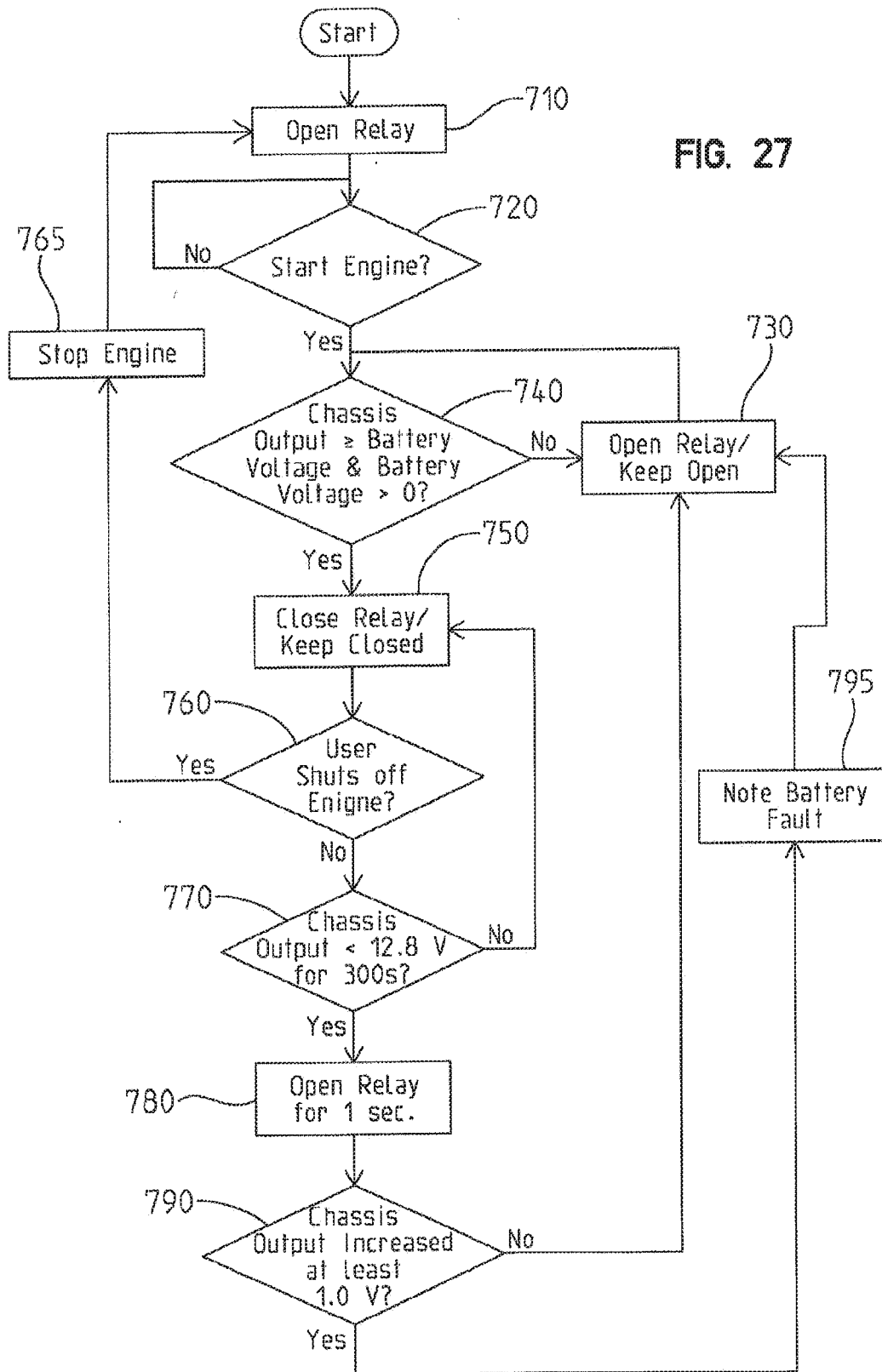


FIG. 27

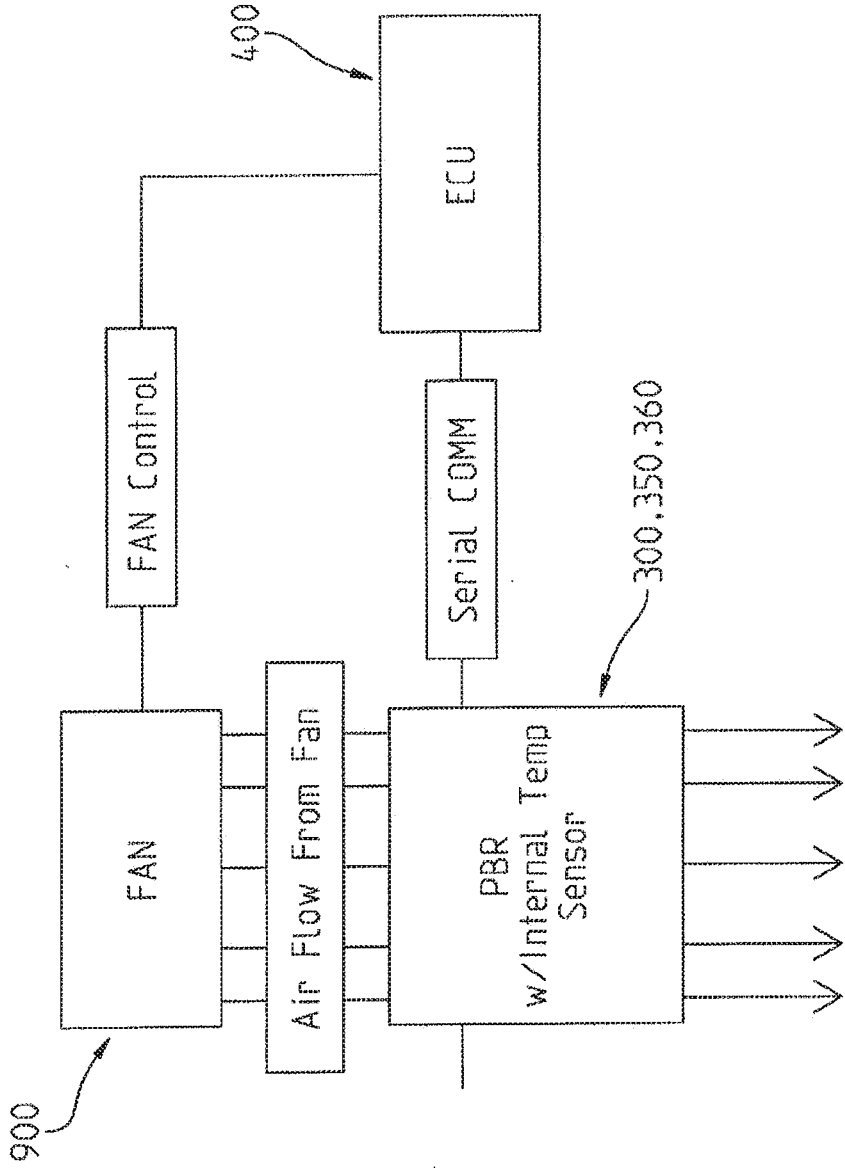


FIG. 29

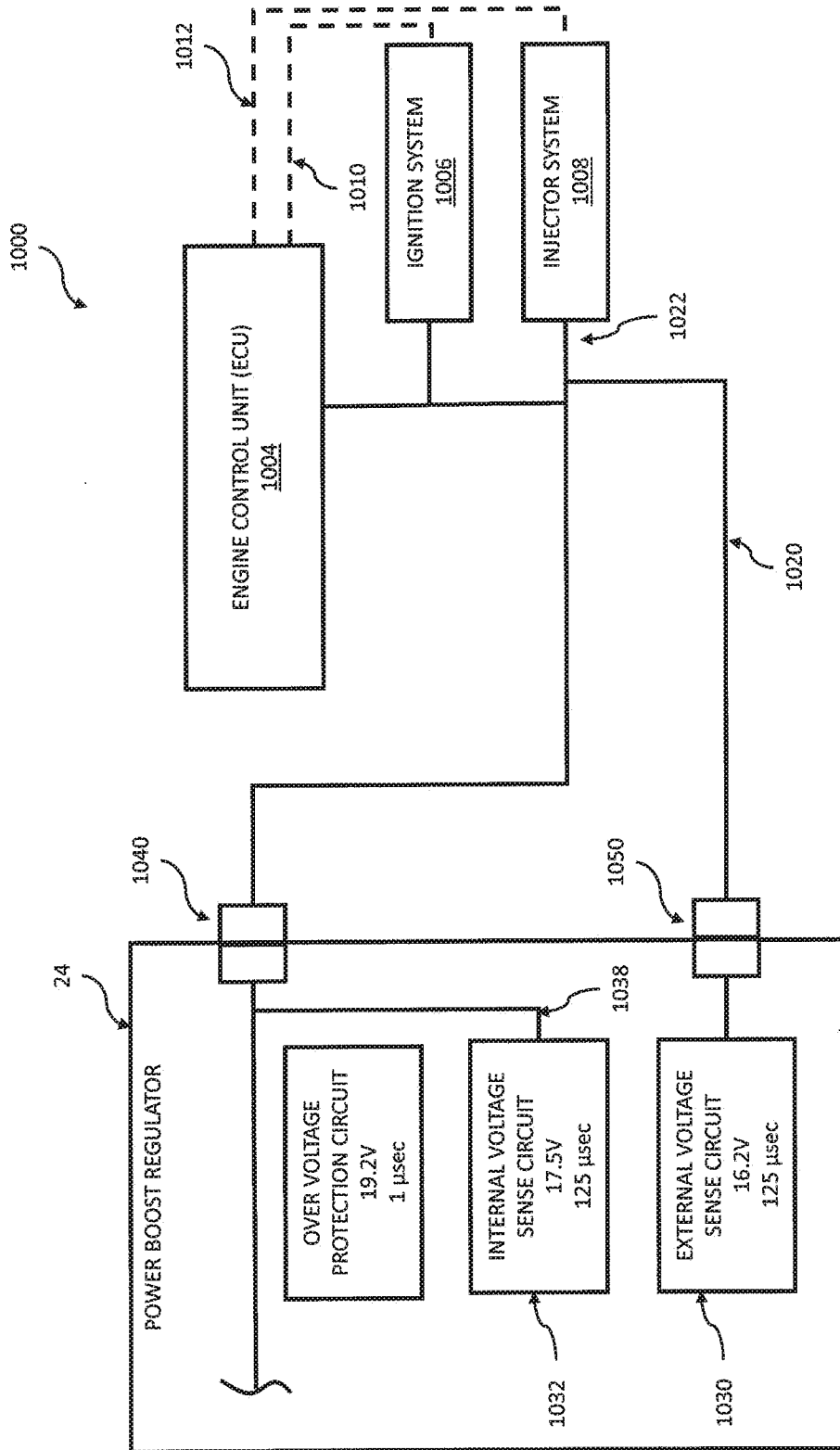


FIG. 31

POWER BOOST REGULATOR

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/160,866, filed May 20, 2016, titled POWER BOOST REGULATOR, docket PLR-01-24896-02P-US-e which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 62/165,284, filed May 22, 2015 titled POWER BOOST REGULATOR, the entire disclosures of which are expressly incorporated by reference herein.

[0002] The entire disclosure of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/160,869, filed May 20, 2016, titled POWER BOOST REGULATOR, docket PLR-01-24896-03P-US-e is expressly incorporated by reference herein.

FIELD OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0003] The present disclosure relates to power generation systems of a vehicle and more particularly to a power boost regulator configured to provide load-matched voltage operation.

BACKGROUND

[0004] Electrical power requirements in recreational vehicles, including Off Road Vehicles, ATVs, snowmobiles, etc., continue to rise as a consequence of increasing electrical loads. Growing electrical power requirements are driving the need for increased power output from the magneto or alternator charging systems that serve as the core of a vehicle's electrical system. Traditionally, magneto size has been scaled to meet increasing electrical power demands, which results in increased cost.

[0005] The power generation systems of many vehicles operate at a fixed load voltage. A load voltage is selected and the charging system is operated at this voltage throughout the RPM range. Such a system results in reduced power at low and high engine speeds and causes the charging system to compromise between power needed at high engine speeds and power needed for engine starting/idling. For example, FIG. 5 illustrates an exemplary power curve 104 showing exemplary power provided by a conventional power generation system over a range of engine speeds. Curve 104 depicts that the conventional power generator compromises on power available at low and/or high engine speeds due to the fixed load voltage constraint and fails to capitalize on maximum power output at low and high engine speeds. In addition, some engines, such as air-cooled engines of snowmobiles for example, are prone to overheating when large currents are produced by the magneto to provide the required vehicle power at the fixed load voltage.

[0006] Some vehicles, such as snowmobiles or other recreational vehicles, include a manual start system, such as a recoil start or a kick start system, for starting the engine of the vehicle. The power requirements for controlling the engine start-up are often difficult to achieve with a manual start. For example, the low engine speeds initiated by the manual pull are often insufficient to generate sufficient power for the engine control unit, thereby forcing multiple manual start attempts by the rider.

[0007] Some recreational vehicles include a plow or other work tool that is driven by a winch or other electric machine that draws power from the power generation system. The engine speed may not be sufficient to maintain proper power

levels to other loads while the electric machine draws power during the plow operation. For example, the battery charge level may not be sufficiently maintained during plowing as a result of the current draw by the plow.

SUMMARY

[0008] The present disclosure provides a power boost regulator operative to harness larger amounts of power from a magneto. In some embodiments, the regulator utilizes low loss field effect transistors (FETs) to implement switching transformations to allow for load matched voltage operation at the stator throughout the entire RPM range. For example, the power boost regulator induces a desired voltage/current combination at the stator for each engine speed to provide the demanded electrical load. In some embodiments, this allows for an increase in power output from a given stator without requiring alteration to the stator or flywheel.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is a diagrammatical view of an exemplary vehicle control system of the present disclosure including a power boost regulator;

[0010] FIG. 2 is a left front perspective view of a vehicle, illustratively a snowmobile, incorporating the power boost regulator of FIG. 1;

[0011] FIG. 3 is a representative view of exemplary stages of the power boost regulator of FIG. 1 including an input stage, a DC/DC converter stage, and an output stage;

[0012] FIG. 4 is a representative view of exemplary configurations of the power boost regulator of FIG. 1;

[0013] FIG. 5 is a graph illustrating a conventional power curve and a power curve provided with the power boost regulator of FIG. 1 over an engine speed range according to some embodiments;

[0014] FIG. 6 is a graph illustrating power versus voltage curves for a plurality of different engine speeds provided by the power boost regulator of FIG. 1 according to some embodiments;

[0015] FIG. 7 is a diagrammatical view of inputs and outputs of an electronic controller for controlling the power boost regulator of FIG. 1 according to some embodiments;

[0016] FIG. 8 is a flow diagram illustrating an exemplary method of operation of the electronic controller of FIGS. 1 and 7;

[0017] FIG. 9 is a flow diagram illustrating an exemplary detailed method of operation of the electronic controller of FIGS. 1 and 7;

[0018] FIG. 10 is a graph illustrating exemplary operating regions of the power boost regulator of FIG. 1 including operating regions to the left and right of the peak power point;

[0019] FIGS. 11A-B is a schematic view of an exemplary power boost regulator including a boost rectifier stage, a buck converter stage, and a power/current steering stage;

[0020] FIG. 11C is a schematic view of another exemplary power boost regulator including a boost rectifier stage and a power/current steering stage;

[0021] FIG. 11D is a schematic view of another exemplary power boost regulator including a boost rectifier stage and a power/current steering stage;

[0022] FIG. 12 is a diagrammatical view of exemplary electrical loads of the system of FIG. 1 for power distribution by the power/current steering stage of FIGS. 11A-B;

[0023] FIGS. 13A-B is a schematic view of another exemplary power boost regulator including a shunt regulator stage and an interleaved buck converter stage;

[0024] FIG. 14 illustrates an exemplary single phase shunt regulator according to an embodiment;

[0025] FIG. 15 illustrates an exemplary three-phase shunt regulator according to an embodiment;

[0026] FIG. 16 illustrates an exemplary control scheme for the shunt regulators of FIGS. 14 and 15;

[0027] FIG. 17 is a perspective view of an engine according to an embodiment including a power generation assembly;

[0028] FIG. 18 is a partially exploded perspective view of the power generation assembly of FIG. 17 including a housing, a shroud, and a magneto and starter assembly;

[0029] FIG. 19 is an exploded back perspective view of the housing and shroud of FIG. 18;

[0030] FIG. 20 is a cross-sectional view of the power generation assembly of FIG. 17 taken along lines 4-4 of FIG. 17;

[0031] FIG. 21 is a back perspective view of the assembled crankcase and power generation assembly of FIG. 17;

[0032] FIG. 22 is a back perspective view of the housing, the shroud, and the recoil starter of FIG. 18;

[0033] FIG. 23A is a schematic view of a magnet pole;

[0034] FIG. 23B is a schematic view of a segmented magnet pole;

[0035] FIG. 24 is a graph showing exemplary voltage output for a power boost regulator;

[0036] FIG. 25 is a flowchart showing operations performed to assess health of capacitors of the power boost regulator;

[0037] FIG. 26 is a schematic view of an exemplary start-up circuit;

[0038] FIG. 27 is a flow chart showing operation of a battery relay;

[0039] FIG. 28 is a schematic view showing operation of power output prioritization;

[0040] FIG. 29 is a schematic view showing operation of a power boost regulator able to call for cooling;

[0041] FIG. 30 is a perspective partially-cut-away view of a flywheel usable with the engine of FIG. 17;

[0042] FIG. 31 illustrates an exemplary voltage monitoring system.

[0043] Corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding parts throughout the several views. The exemplification set out herein illustrates embodiments of the invention, and such exemplifications are not to be construed as limiting the scope of the invention in any manner.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0044] The embodiments disclosed herein are not intended to be exhaustive or limit the disclosure to the precise forms disclosed in the following detailed description. Rather, the embodiments are chosen and described so that others skilled in the art may utilize their teachings.

[0045] The term “logic” or “control logic” as used herein may include software and/or firmware executing on one or more programmable processors, application-specific integrated circuits (ASICs), field-programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), digital signal processors (DSPs), hardwired logic, or combinations thereof. Therefore, in accordance with the embodiments, various logic may be implemented in any

appropriate fashion and would remain in accordance with the embodiments herein disclosed.

[0046] Referring initially to FIG. 1, an illustrative embodiment of a vehicle control system 10 includes an electronic controller 12, an engine 16, a transmission 18, and an AC power source 22 driven by engine 16. A power boost regulator 24 in communication with electronic controller 12 is operative to control the generation and delivery of power provided by power source 22, as described herein. AC power source 22, power boost regulator 24, and electronic controller 12 provide a power generation system 21 for the vehicle.

[0047] Electronic controller 12 receives a plurality of inputs and controls a plurality of output devices of the vehicle. For example, controller 12 is operative to output an electrical signal indicative of a throttle percentage to an actuator of throttle 17 to control a position of the throttle valve for regulating air intake and controlling engine speed. In one embodiment, the throttle opening percentage is based at least in part on the detected position of accelerator 34 actuated by the rider. Accelerator 34, which includes a position sensor, may be an accelerator pedal, a thumb actuated lever, a twist grip, or any other suitable operator input device that, when actuated by an operator, is configured to provide an operator throttle demand to controller 12. A throttle valve position sensor provides feedback to controller 12 indicative of the actual position or degree of opening of throttle 17. Additional details of electronic throttle control provided with controller 12 is disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/152,981, filed Jun. 3, 2011, entitled ELECTRONIC THROTTLE CONTROL, the entire disclosure of which is expressly incorporated by reference herein.

[0048] In some embodiments, controller 12 receives signals from position sensor(s) of a user-operated brake 36 identifying a brake demand and controls the vehicle brakes (if equipped) based on the brake demand. The vehicle may alternatively include mechanically (e.g., cable) controlled brakes and/or throttle. A mode input device 32 provides a signal to controller 12 representative of a mode of operation (e.g., normal, plow, generation, performance, etc.) of the vehicle. Control system 10 includes a battery 14 providing voltage and/or state of charge feedback to controller 12, although in other embodiments the vehicle may be battery-less.

[0049] Controller 12 includes one or more processors 13 that execute software and/or firmware code stored in internal or external memory 15 of controller 12. The software/firmware code contains instructions that, when executed by the one or more processors 13 of controller 12, causes controller 12 to perform the vehicle functions described herein. Controller 12 may alternatively include one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASICs), field-programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), digital signal processors (DSPs), hardwired logic, or combinations thereof. Controller 12 may include one or more physical control modules in communication with one another. For example, controller 12 may include one or more of an engine control unit (ECU), a vehicle control unit (VCU), a transmission control unit (TCU), and/or other suitable control modules operating to control the functionality of the vehicle.

[0050] Memory 15 is any suitable computer readable medium that is accessible by the processor(s) 13 of controller 12. Memory 15 may be a single storage device or multiple storage devices, may be located internally or exter-

nally to controller 12, and may include both volatile and non-volatile media. Exemplary memory 15 includes random-access memory (RAM), read-only memory (ROM), electrically erasable programmable ROM (EEPROM), flash memory, CD-ROM, Digital Versatile Disk (DVD) or other optical disk storage, a magnetic storage device, or any other suitable medium which is configured to store data and which is accessible by controller 12.

[0051] Transmission 18 illustratively includes an electronically controlled continuously variable transmission (eCVT), although other transmission types may be provided. Electronic controller 12 provides a clutch angle control signal to eCVT 18 to control the transmission gear ratio. Additional details of the control and operation of eCVT 18 are disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/652,253, filed Oct. 15, 2012, entitled PRIMARY CLUTCH ELECTRONIC CVT, issued as U.S. Pat. No. 8,682,550, the entire disclosure of which is expressly incorporated by reference herein.

[0052] Power source 22 provides alternating current (AC) power for use by various components and systems of the vehicle. In the illustrated embodiment, power source 22 includes a magneto or alternator (e.g., magneto 524 of FIG. 18) coupled to the output of engine 16. Engine 16 drives power source 22 to generate the AC power regulated by power boost regulator 24.

[0053] Power boost regulator 24 is operative to control the generation and delivery of power provided by power source 22. Power boost regulator 24 includes an AC-DC converter operative to convert the AC generated power from power source 22 to DC power deliverable to electrical loads 38. As described herein, power boost regulator 24 is operative to provide load matched voltage operation by inducing in the stator a voltage and current to achieve a target power output for each engine speed. Further, power boost regulator 24 is operative to selectively direct power to different electrical loads 38 based on the available power and a power distribution priority, as described herein. Illustrative electrical loads 38 include system loads 26, critical loads 28, and chassis loads 30. System loads 26 include one or more electronic control units of the vehicle, such as the engine control unit (ECU) of controller 12, for example, for controlling engine operation such as fuel injection and ignition. Critical loads 28 include critical components for engine operation such as the fuel pump, oil pump, and electrical valve actuator (e.g., throttle valve actuator, etc.). Chassis loads 30 include, for example, vehicle lights, a battery charging system, air conditioning, panel instrumentation, electrically operated handwarmers, and other suitable non-critical loads.

[0054] Referring to FIG. 2, an exemplary vehicle incorporating control system 10 of FIG. 1 is illustrated in the form of a snowmobile 50. Other suitable vehicles may incorporate control system 10. Snowmobile 50 of FIG. 2 includes a chassis or frame 52 having a front frame portion 52a and a rear frame portion 52b. A body assembly 54 generally surrounds at least front frame portion 52a of frame 52. Front frame portion 52a is supported by front ground-engaging members, illustratively skis 56, and rear frame portion 52b is supported by a rear ground-engaging member, illustratively an endless track 58. The rider uses a steering assembly 60, which is operably coupled to at least skis 56, to control the direction of snowmobile 50. A seat assembly 62 is

provided generally rearward of steering assembly 60 and is configured to support the rider.

[0055] Front skis 56 are operably coupled to a front suspension assembly 64, and endless track 58 cooperates with a rear suspension assembly 66. A powertrain assembly is positioned generally intermediate front suspension assembly 64 and rear suspension assembly 66, and provides power to endless track 58 to move snowmobile 50. For example, the powertrain assembly includes engine 16 and transmission 18 of FIG. 1 and at least one drive shaft. Additional details of snowmobile 50 are disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/763,282, filed on Feb. 8, 2013 (Attorney Docket No. PLR-01-25175.02P), U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/151,983, filed on Jan. 10, 2014 (Attorney Docket No. PLR-01-25175.05P), U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/152,596, filed on Jan. 10, 2014 (Attorney Docket No. PLR-01-25175.04P), U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/513,949, filed on Aug. 1, 2011 (Attorney Docket No. PLR-01-24987.01P), and U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/582,426, filed on Jan. 2, 2012 (Attorney Docket No. PLR-01-25120.01P), the complete disclosures of which are expressly incorporated by reference herein.

[0056] Referring to FIG. 3, a system level diagram of power boost regulator 24 of FIG. 1 is illustrated. Power boost regulator 24 implements closed loop control to induce a load matched voltage in the stator of power source 22, i.e., a voltage and current in the stator corresponding to a stator power output suitable for the load. Power boost regulator 24 illustratively includes an input portion or stage 80, a DC/DC conversion stage 82, and an output stage 84. In the illustrated embodiment, input stage 80 includes an AC-DC rectifier and boost converter circuit, conversion stage 82 includes a DC/DC buck converter circuit, and output stage 84 includes a power/current distribution circuit, such as a current steering circuit as described herein or another suitable distribution circuit. In another embodiment, power boost regulator 24 includes only input stage 80 and output stage 84 and does not include DC/DC conversion stage 82.

[0057] FIG. 4 includes a chart 70 illustrating three different configurations 72 of power boost regulator 24 including a boost configuration, a boost-buck configuration, and a boost-interleaved buck configuration. In each configuration, power boost regulator 24 includes a boost rectifier circuit as input stage 80 that includes an AC-DC rectifier and a boost converter. In the boost configuration, power boost regulator 24 does not include a DC-DC converter stage 82 and includes a current steering circuit as the output stage 84. In the boost-buck configuration, power boost regulator 24 includes a step-down buck converter circuit as DC/DC stage 82 and a current steering circuit as output stage 84. In the boost-interleaved buck configuration, power boost regulator 24 includes interleaved buck converter circuit as DC/DC stage 82 and a single output circuit as output stage 84. Alternatively, the boost-interleaved buck configuration may include a current steering circuit as the output stage 84. An exemplary boost rectifier circuit 304, step down buck converter circuit 306, and current steering circuit 308 are illustrated in FIGS. 11A-B and described herein. An exemplary interleaved buck converter circuit 356 and single output circuit 358 are illustrated in FIGS. 13A-B and described herein.

[0058] FIG. 5 is a graph 100 illustrating two exemplary power curves 102, 104 versus engine speed (RPM). Power

curve **102** illustrates exemplary maximum power in Watts (W) that AC power source **22** is operative to generate over a range of engine speeds as controlled by power boost regulator **24**. Curve **104** illustrates the maximum power that a conventional generation system is able to provide over the same range of engine speeds due to operation at a fixed system load voltage (e.g., 16V). As illustrated in FIG. 5, power boost regulator **24** of FIG. 1 is operative to capture and store additional energy at low engine speeds, illustratively speeds between zero RPM and 1200 RPM, as well as at high engine speeds, illustratively speeds greater than 1500 RPM. While an exemplary speed range of 2000 RPM is illustrated in FIG. 5, other suitable speed ranges may be provided depending on engine type and configuration. Accordingly, power boost regulator **24** serves to increase the available electrical power across a larger range or an entire range of engine speeds as compared to the conventional AC/DC rectifier. In an embodiment with engine having a manual start (e.g., pull-start, kick-start, etc.), the likelihood of the engine starting after a single pull or kick on the recoil starter is improved due to the availability of power at lower engine speeds.

[0059] Referring to FIG. 6, a graph **110** illustrates exemplary power (W) versus voltage (V) curves generated by AC power source **22** of FIG. 1 as controlled by power boost regulator **24** of FIG. 1 for a subset of engine speeds (RPM). Curve **112** represents generated power at 200 RPM, curve **114** represents generated power at 500 RPM, curve **116** represents generated power at 800 RPM, curve **118** represents generated power at 1200 RPM, curve **120** represents generated power at 1500 RPM, curve **122** represents generated power at 2000 RPM, and curve **124** represents generated power at 2500 RPM. As illustrated, the output power varies for a given engine speed based on the output voltage. In the illustrated embodiment, there is a single peak power point at each engine speed. In particular, at each engine speed there is an output voltage at which a maximum output power is achieved, and the voltage is not the same for every engine speed. As such, in one embodiment, power deliverable by AC power source **22** is maximized for a single load matched output voltage at each engine speed. In one embodiment, the different peak power points are achieved due to high armature leakage inductance of AC power source **22** that results in a large DC-side output impedance of power boost regulator **24**, thereby causing the power deliverable by AC power source **22** at a given engine speed to be maximized for a single load-matched output voltage. Accordingly, power boost regulator **24** is capable of performing load matched voltage operation and adjusting its operating voltage to allow for maximum power production at each engine speed.

[0060] An exemplary maximum power curve **126** of FIG. 6 intersects each peak power point of power curves **112-124** for the illustrated engine speeds, while maximum power curve **102** of FIG. 5 illustrates exemplary maximum power points for all engine speeds. Maximum power curves **126** (FIG. 6) and **102** (FIG. 5) thereby illustrate the additional power that is available for capture and storage across the engine speed range as compared to a conventional power generator depicted by curve **104** of FIG. 5.

[0061] At each engine speed, there is also an output voltage above which the output current (and therefore output power) of AC power source **22** becomes zero, referred to herein as the open circuit current. In some embodiments, this

output voltage for each engine speed corresponds to the peak of the line-to-line emf voltage above which rectification diodes of power boost regulator **24** do not conduct electricity. The curves of FIGS. 5 and 6 are exemplary curves according to one embodiment. Different embodiments of power boost regulator **24** may provide different shaped curves depending on the configuration of power boost regulator **24** and the AC power source **22**.

[0062] FIG. 7 illustrates an electronic controller **128**, illustratively a microcontroller **128**, for controlling power boost regulator **24** of FIG. 1. In one embodiment, microcontroller **128** is a component of electronic controller **12** of FIG. 1 and communicates with the ECU and other control unit(s) of electronic controller **12** (e.g., via CAN or other communication protocol). Microcontroller **128** illustratively includes power boost regulator control logic **130** operative to perform control functionality for power boost regulator **24**. Microcontroller **128** determines the stator current based on feedback signals from at least one current sensor **142** at the stator of AC power source **22**. Microcontroller **128** determines the system voltage, i.e., the voltage available at the output of power boost regulator **24** for use by electrical loads, based on feedback signals from at least one voltage sensor **144**. In one embodiment, voltage sensor **144** is positioned external to power boost regulator **24** and monitors a voltage input to a first electrical load of a plurality of electrical loads **38** of the vehicle. In one example, the first electrical load is the highest priority load receiving power from power boost regulator **24** based on the available power and a power distribution priority. An exemplary voltage monitoring system is depicted in FIG. 31 and discussed in more detail herein. Returning to FIG. 7, the measured stator current and measured system voltage are provided as input to control logic **130**. Control logic **130** also receives as input a target system voltage **141**, which is a constant predetermined value representing the required load voltage.

[0063] Microcontroller **128** calculates the engine speed (RPM) **134** based on output from an engine speed sensor **132**. In the illustrated embodiment, sensor **132** provides a signal indicative of the zero voltage crossing of each phase of the three-phase magneto (e.g., AC power source **22** of FIG. 1), and microcontroller **128** calculates engine speed **134** based on the zero voltage crossing information. In one embodiment, based on the engine speed **134**, microcontroller **128** accesses a magneto data lookup table **136** stored in memory **15** (FIG. 1) to determine a corresponding current value **138** for maximum power for the measured engine speed and a short circuit current value **140** for the measured engine speed. In particular, value **138** is the current level at which AC power source **22** outputs a maximum power for that engine speed. Short circuit current value **140** is the current level at which the stator power goes to zero. Power boost regulator control logic **130** receives as input the maximum power current value **138** and short circuit current value **140** and controls power boost regulator **24** based on these values. Based on the inputs including target voltage **141**, max power current **138**, short circuit current **140**, measured stator current **142**, and measured system voltage **144**, control logic **130** provides a control output to drive boost rectifier circuit **80** (FIGS. 3 and 4) of power boost regulator **24** such that AC power source **22** (FIG. 1) generates power at the desired voltage and current levels. In the illustrated embodiment, microcontroller **128** includes an internal or external pulse width modulation (PWM) genera-

tor **150** that receives a duty cycle command from control logic **130** and thereby outputs a drive signal **152** to drive boost rectifier circuit **80**.

[0064] In one embodiment, magneto data lookup table **136** is unique to the type and model of AC power source **22** installed in the vehicle. Magneto data lookup table **136** comprises data identifying the power characteristics of AC power source **22** (FIG. 1) of the vehicle for all or multiple engine speeds. For example, lookup table **136** contains current, voltage, and power values corresponding to an entire engine speed range or to a plurality of engine speeds in the range. In one embodiment with lookup table **136** containing power characteristics for a plurality, but not all, engine speeds, controller **12** selects an engine speed available in table **136** that is closest to the measured engine speed for determining the power characteristics. For example, if the measured engine speed is 2250 RPM, and lookup table **136** contains power characteristics for engine speeds of 2150 RPM and 2300 RPM, controller **12** selects 2300 RPM as the “measured” engine speed for purposes of determining the maximum power current **138** and short circuit current **140** of FIG. 7.

[0065] Referring still to FIG. 7, in one embodiment output control logic **156** receives voltage inputs **146** comprising the measured voltages at each electrical load or for each electrical load group (e.g., system loads **26**, critical loads **28**, chassis loads **30** of FIG. 1) of the electrical system. For example, output control logic **156** may receive these inputs when power boost regulator **24** includes the current steering circuit for output stage **84** (FIGS. 3 and 4). In this embodiment, output control logic **156** provides a control output **154** for driving output stage **84** (FIG. 3) to distribute the power based on the priority of the electrical loads, as described herein. In one embodiment, output **154** is generated by an internal or external PWM generator **158** and includes a pulse width modulation (PWM)/gate drive signal for driving MOSFETs of the current steering circuit.

[0066] Referring to FIG. 8, a flow diagram **170** illustrates a control method of microcontroller **128** of FIG. 7 for controlling power boost regulator **24** according to an illustrative embodiment. At blocks **172** and **174**, microcontroller **128** uses data from magneto lookup table **136** for the measured engine speed to set minimum and maximum current limits of the stator of AC power source **22** (FIG. 1), as described in greater detail herein with respect to FIGS. 9 and 10. At block **180**, control logic **130** controls the system voltage, i.e., the load voltage output by power boost regulator **24**, with proportional-integral (PI) control based on inputs including the minimum/maximum current limits and the target voltage and measured system voltage (block **176**). Control logic **130** further controls the stator current at block **186** with proportional-integral (PI) control based on the target stator current and the measured stator current (block **184**). Microcontroller **128** drives the boost rectifier circuit **80** (FIGS. 3 and 4) of power boost regulator **24** to the system voltage and stator current determined at blocks **180**, **186** using a pulse width modulation signal (block **188**) having an appropriate duty cycle and frequency (e.g., via PWM generator **150** of FIG. 7).

[0067] Referring to FIG. 9, a flow diagram **200** illustrates a detailed control method performed by microcontroller **128** of FIG. 7 for controlling power boost regulator **24** according to some embodiments. In the illustrated embodiment, when the power generation system does not operate at the maxi-

imum or peak power point, microcontroller **128** is capable of driving power boost regulator **24** to control AC power source **22** (FIG. 1) at one of two operating conditions for each engine speed, referred to herein as left side control strategy and right side control strategy. FIG. 10 illustrates an exemplary power versus voltage curve **234** and a current versus voltage curve **232** for a given engine speed. For any power level (other than maximum power point **236**) at the given engine speed, power boost regulator **24** is capable of controlling the output power of AC power source **22** in two different operating points or conditions, including a first voltage/current combination in left side control region **244** (i.e., left of the peak power point **236**) and a second voltage/current combination in the right side control region **246**. For example, for a power level P_1 , control logic **130** is operative to control power boost regulator **24** such that the output power P_1 of AC power source **22** is achieved with a first voltage V_1 and current I_1 combination or a second voltage V_2 and current I_2 combination. V_1, I_1 is in the left side control region **244** and operates at a lower voltage and a higher current, while V_2, I_2 is in the right side control region **246** and thereby operates at a higher voltage and a lower current.

[0068] Control logic **130** of microcontroller **128** determines which region **244**, **246** to operate in based on a number of factors. In the illustrated embodiment, power boost regulator **24** normally operates in right-side region **246** as long as hardware limits are not reached. In one embodiment, hardware limits include maximum voltage thresholds of hardware components. For example, an exemplary maximum operating voltage of MOSFET devices may be about 80 volts. When a hardware limit is reached during right-side region **246** control, power boost regulator **24** is operative to switch operation to left-side region **244**. In the illustrated embodiment, operation in right-side region **246** results in lower stator temperature and lower internal temperature of power boost regulator **24** due to lower current levels as compared to operation in left-side region **244**.

[0069] In one embodiment, power boost regulator **24** operates in left-side region **244** during startup, idle, and low engine speed conditions and switches over to right-side control region **246** after the engine speed crosses a speed threshold. In this embodiment, the higher currents and lower voltages in the left-side control region **244** drive the power boost circuit for starting the engine and maintaining suitable power levels during low engine speeds. The engine speed threshold is based at least in part on the stator and flywheel design. An exemplary engine speed threshold in one engine configuration is about 1600 to 1700 RPM, although other suitable thresholds may be provided based on engine design.

[0070] In another embodiment, power boost regulator **24** may normally operate in the left side region **244** in certain configurations, such as in the boost (no buck) configuration or the boost-interleaved buck configuration of FIG. 4.

[0071] In an alternative implementation wherein power boost regulator **24** does not include a DC/DC conversion stage **82**, the number of stator winding turns of AC power source **22** and the output voltage level of AC power source **22** are selected such that the stator open-circuit voltage is always at or below the output voltage level, thereby allowing continuous operation on the right-side region **246** of the stator power curve of FIG. 10 without requiring DC-DC conversion stage **82**.

[0072] In the illustrated embodiment, operation in the left side region 244 results in lower voltages and higher currents, while operation in right side region 246 results in higher voltages and lower currents for the same power output. In one embodiment, operation in right side region 246 results in lower heat generation in AC power source 22 due to lower stator currents. In one embodiment, operation in right side region 246 results in less shunting and lower generator braking torque on the engine. Control logic 130 is operative to switch between operation regions 244, 246 for each configuration of power boost regulator 24 based on voltage/current limits, other hardware limits, and/or temperature limits being reached. For example, if operating in the left side region 244 and the stator or engine temperature exceeds a temperature threshold, control logic 130 is operative to switch to right side region 246 to reduce the stator current while maintaining the same power output, thereby reducing heat generation by the stator. Similarly, if operating in right side region 246 and hardware limits are reached, control logic 130 is operative to switch to left side region 244 while maintaining the same power output.

[0073] When power boost regulator 24 operates in left side control region 244 of FIG. 10, the minimum current level is set (block 174 of FIG. 8) to the current at maximum power 238 for the given engine speed, and the maximum current level (block 174 of FIG. 8) is set to the short circuit current level 240 for the given engine speed. When power boost regulator 24 operates in right side control region 246, the minimum current level is set to zero (open circuit current), and the maximum current level is set to the current at maximum power 238 for the given engine speed.

[0074] In method 200 of FIG. 9, control logic 130 determines a voltage error at 204 based on the difference between the target system (load) voltage 202 and the measured system (load) voltage 206. In one embodiment, the target system voltage is fixed and based on the electrical loads. At block 212, control logic 130 commands a target stator voltage via PI control based on the voltage error and the minimum and maximum current levels determined at block 174 of FIG. 8. In particular, the currents from lookup table 136 corresponding to the min/max current levels for the measured engine speed are used as the lower and upper current limits of PI control 212. Control logic 130 at 214 determines the target stator current based on the target stator voltage (i.e., $\text{current} = \text{power}/\text{voltage}$) and the maximum current level. The maximum current level input to block 214 is the short circuit current when operating in left side control region 244 of FIG. 10 and the maximum power current when operating in the right side control region 246 of FIG. 10, as described herein. At block 216, control logic 130 determines a current error based on the difference between the measured current 218 and the target stator current and commands the stator target current using PI control. In the illustrated embodiment, the target stator voltage and target stator current are commanded using a pulse width modulation generator as described herein.

[0075] In the illustrated embodiment, power boost regulator 24 is configured to operate in a plurality of different modes selectable by a user with mode input device 32 of FIG. 1. Referring to FIG. 1, mode input device 32, which may be provided on an instrument cluster, provides a discrete or CAN input signal to electronic controller 12 indicative of the selected mode. One exemplary mode is a plow mode of operation. The plow mode may be used during a

work operation of the vehicle, such as when plowing and/or hauling snow, earth, or other material, due to the additional power drawn by the electrical actuator of the plow or work tool. In the plow mode, controller 12 monitors the output voltage and battery charge output percentage of power boost regulator 24 and controls the fuel to injectors 20, the throttle opening percentage, and the clutch control angle of eCVT 18 to achieve higher engine speeds at idle and low vehicle speeds. For example, when the vehicle is idling or moving at low speeds below a predetermined speed threshold in the plow mode, controller 12 speeds up engine 16 and adjusts the transmission ratio accordingly to maintain the proper vehicle speed. The higher engine speed results in additional power output by AC power source 22. In the plow mode, electronic controller 12 communicates a target charging output percentage to power boost regulator 24 (e.g., for charging the vehicle battery) and retrieves or receives the actual charging output percentage from power boost regulator 24. Controller 12 then adjusts the engine speed to provide the required power to achieve the target charging output percentage. For example, if controller 12 calls for 100% charging output and the battery voltage is not at the desired voltage, controller 12 increases the engine RPM such that the battery may be charged to the proper level during the work operation.

[0076] Another exemplary mode of operation of power boost regulator 24 is a performance mode. In the performance mode, controller 12 operates power boost regulator 24 to improve the performance (e.g., acceleration) of the vehicle by reducing the load on engine 16 during periods of high acceleration and/or high engine speeds. In one embodiment, electronic controller 12 controls power boost regulator 24 to draw less current from AC power source 22 in response to detecting an acceleration that exceeds a threshold and/or an engine speed that exceeds a threshold. Power boost regulator 24 achieves the reduced current draw by doing one or more of the following: reducing the output voltage on the non-critical output loads (e.g., chassis loads 30 of FIG. 1) via the current steering circuit, removing the output voltage from the chassis loads 30 for an adjustable period of time via the current steering circuit, and/or drawing the power from AC power source 22 at a higher voltage and a smaller current (e.g., switching to operation at right side region 246 of FIG. 10). Other suitable modes of operation may be selected and implemented with power boost regulator 24.

[0077] FIGS. 11A-B illustrates a circuit-level view of an exemplary power boost regulator 300 according to an illustrative embodiment. Power boost regulator 300 includes control circuitry 314 for controlling operation of power boost regulator 300, including MOSFETs Q1-Q11. In the illustrated embodiment, control circuitry 314 includes microcontroller 128 of FIG. 7 that controls functionality of and measures characteristics of power boost regulator 300. Control circuitry 314 further includes voltage dividers for feedback signals, current measurement circuits, temperature measurement circuits, magneto phase level signal detectors, and other suitable control circuitry, such as the input/output devices illustrated in FIG. 7. An exemplary boost rectifier circuit 304 corresponding to input stage 80 of FIG. 3 is coupled to the output of a three-phase stator 302 of AC power source 22 (FIG. 1). Boost rectifier 304 includes a bridge rectifier comprising MOSFET devices Q1-Q6 driven by controller 12 (e.g., PWM generator 150 of FIG. 7) for causing stator 302 to see its RPM dependent load matched

voltage and to produce the target power levels at the desired voltage and current combinations. Resistors R2, R3 are coupled in series with the three phase output of stator 302 for measuring inductor current of stator 302, and another current sensing resistor R1 is coupled at the output of boost rectifier 304. In one embodiment, MOSFET devices Q1-Q11 of power boost regulator 300 of FIGS. 11A-B are low loss switching MOSFETs.

[0078] Power boost regulator 300 illustratively includes a DC-DC buck converter circuit 306 including a pair of MOSFETs Q10, Q11, an inductor L1, and a capacitor C6. MOSFETs Q10, Q11 are driven by the PWM generator to provide open loop DC-DC conversion control. In one embodiment, buck converter circuit 306 runs different fixed PWM duty cycles to improve efficiency and reduce the likelihood of high boost ratios. In one embodiment, buck converter circuit 306 reduces the DC power supply to the proper point when the supply exceeds the required load. In one embodiment, the power boost regulator 300 with DC-DC buck converter circuit 306 normally operates in the right side region 246 of FIG. 10 unless hardware or temperature limits are reached.

[0079] In an exemplary operation, MOSFETs Q10, Q11 are operated in complementary fashion at a fixed frequency and duty cycle in order to step down a higher voltage across C6 to a lower voltage on the output of the buck section 306. Complementary operation means that Q10 and Q11 are never both turned on simultaneously. The duty cycle is set to the desired step-down ratio, i.e., operation of Q10 at 25% duty cycle and complementary operation of Q11 at 75% duty cycle results in a buck section output voltage that is 25% of the input voltage. In one embodiment, the frequency of MOSFET activation and the inductance are selected to reduce current ripple in the inductor L1.

[0080] Power boost regulator 300 further includes a current steering circuit 308 coupled to the output of buck converter circuit 306 (or the output of boost rectifier 304 if circuit 306 is not used). Current steering circuit 308 is operative to distribute power to multiple output loads based on a priority schedule. For example, referring to FIG. 12, several exemplary load devices 440 are coupled to the output of power boost regulator 24 and have a preconfigured priority. An engine control unit (ECU) 400 is driven by a 16 VDC power and controls fuel injection 410 (injectors 20 of FIG. 1), engine throttle, and engine ignition 412 and monitors engine parameters via engine sensors 414. In the illustrated embodiment, ECU 400 has the highest priority for current steering circuit 308 of FIGS. 11A-B so that the engine can be run properly during periods of limited electrical power. Engine fuel pump 418 and a relay 419 illustratively have the next highest priority, and relay 419 routes power to headlights 424 and instrumentation 432. Engine loads 402 illustratively have the next highest priority for current steering circuit 308 and receive 14 VDC power for an engine oil pump 416 and an exhaust valve actuator 420 and other suitable loads classified as having the next highest priority for engine operation. Exhaust valve actuator 420 controls the position of exhaust valves on the engine. Chassis loads 406 have the next highest priority and receive 14 VDC power for various vehicle loads including taillights 422, handwarmers 426 (if equipped), accessory (ACC) power 428 (e.g., connected to other non-essential accessory loads), battery charging 430, and other suitable chassis loads that are not critical to proper engine operation. In one

embodiment, the above priority scheme allows the headlights and hand-warmers to be fully active at engine idle. Other suitable priority schemes may be implemented.

[0081] Current steering circuit 308 of FIGS. 11A-B includes MOSFETs Q7-Q9, diodes D1-D5, and capacitors C1-C5 that cooperate to control the priority of power delivery to the electrical loads. In the illustrated embodiment, control circuitry 314 is preconfigured to control current steering circuit 308 according to the desired power distribution hierarchy. Referring to FIG. 12, in one embodiment current steering circuit 308 always delivers first available power to ECU 400. If the power received by ECU 400 meets the demand (e.g., 16 VDC), current steering circuit 308 switches on power to critical loads including fuel pump 418 and relay 419 (FIG. 12). If power received by fuel pump 418 and relay 419 meets demand (e.g., 14-16 VDC), current steering circuit 308 switches on power to engine loads 402 (FIG. 12). If power received by engine loads 402 meets demand (e.g., 14 VDC), current steering circuit 308 switches on power to chassis loads 406 (FIG. 12). In one embodiment, after meeting the power requirements for each load 440, excess power from power boost regulator 24 is routed to an external shunt resistor 408 for dissipation. If power output is limited during engine operation, current steering circuit 308 drops power to the loads in order of least priority to improve the likelihood of maintaining proper engine operation, i.e., switches off power to chassis load 406 first, followed by engine loads 402, etc.

[0082] FIG. 28 schematically illustrates another embodiment system 800 to control multiple voltage outputs based on the priority of power delivery to the electrical loads. The loads are illustrated as outputs 1-n (801, 802, 80n). Furthermore, the outputs represent pulse-width modulation duty cycles where an output receives a percentage of the full cycle or period. In the illustrated case, output one 801 is the output with the highest priority. The full input power (from source 810) is available to output 1, 801. For outputs of lower priority, 2-n (802-80n), the maximum ON-time (pulse-width modulation duty cycle) is the full period less the sum of the ON-times for all outputs of a higher priority (see summer 830). This is represented by the “%” variability pieces 820, 830 of FIG. 28.

[0083] During any time that power is delivered to a shunt (such as shunt 408) (shunt time), no power is delivered to the system (AC phases shorted). To control the power delivered to the system the shunt time is adjusted based on the power demand of the outputs 1-n. In the event of a system power demand that exceeds the power capabilities of the source, the voltage (power) from the output with the lowest priority is eliminated first. As such, higher priority components are able to be provided in a stable manner while only low priority functionality is sacrificed, and then only sacrificed when (and to the extent) needed. Still further, a power draining failure on a lower priority component (such as a short in a handgrip heater) does not have the ability to negatively impact operation of higher priority elements such as engine operation.

[0084] In one embodiment, power boost regulator 24 is operative to direct pulse width modulation of fuel pump 418, thereby allowing fuel pump 418 pump pressure to be scaled as needed. In one embodiment, fuel pump 418 further serves as a partial power shunt.

[0085] In one embodiment, the priorities for power are dynamic. In such an embodiment, the priority for loads is

dependent on other factors. In one embodiment, the RPM of the engine is an input in determining the priority for loads. For example, at engine RPM's of less than 1500, chassis loads **30** are prioritized over critical loads **28** for any portions of a duty cycle beyond the absolute minimum needed to supply each load. Alternatively, at engine RPM's of greater than 1500, critical loads **28** (or other loads) are prioritized over chassis loads **30** for any excess portion of a duty cycle (excess portions being those portions not absolutely necessary for minimum viable function of a component.) As one implementation of this, when engine RPM's are below 1500, this represents an idle state. As such, components that serve to propel the vehicle are not being fully utilized. Thus, the duty cycle excess is better served by being made available to chassis loads, such as a load that charges the battery or ultracapacitor.

[0086] In the illustrated embodiment of FIGS. **11A-B**, power boost regulator **300** provides a wake-up operation for starting the engine. In particular, when the engine is initially rotated for starting via a pull-start or other actuation mechanism, power from stator **302** bypasses boost rectifier stage **304** via the intrinsic diodes (e.g., diode **312**, etc.) of MOSFETs **Q1-Q6** to build up voltage in capacitor **C1**. Once the voltage across **C1** exceeds a turn-on threshold, control circuitry **314** powers up and begins operating MOSFETs **Q1-Q6** of boost rectifier stage **304** based on control commands from microcontroller **128** (FIG. **7**).

[0087] FIG. **26** illustrates a start-up circuit **600**. Start-up circuit **600** operates to increase power generation during start-up, thereby improving starting quality. For batteryless systems, voltage regulator **350** is powered via the permanent magnet magneto **22** output during engine start. Body diodes in the Boost/Rectify MOSFETs **Q1-Q6**, **304**, rectify the AC voltage from the stator to produce power. Output power can be increased by periodic shunting of the stator output. While shunted, the stator current builds up so that when the shunting stops, the higher current is delivered, charging capacitor **C3** (**610**). It should be appreciated that the shown circuit is operable to shunt the stator with voltage of less than 1V. As such, the provided circuit is able to operate at a relatively low voltage. This ability allows starting the regulator **350** and engine at a lower voltage than would otherwise be permitted. This low starting voltage allows for a reduced number of stator turns, which boosts output power at higher RPM. The system overall provides for easier starting.

[0088] Again referring to the circuit **600** of FIG. **26**, during engine start, the diodes in MOSFETs **Q1-Q6** rectify the low AC voltage and charge capacitor **C3** through diode **D1**. IC **U2** is a low drop-out voltage regulator. Initially VDD is nearly equal to the voltage across **C3**. When VDD reaches approximately 0.75V, the **U1** oscillator circuit starts operation, connecting GATE to VDD and charging **C1**. When **C1** exceeds a predetermined percentage of VDD, GATE is turned off and pin **7** of **U1** is pulled low, discharging **C1**. When the voltage held by **C1** becomes less than a second, lower percentage of VDD, GATE is turned ON, pin **7** becomes high-resistance, and **C1** resumes charging, restarting the cycle.

[0089] The voltage pulses on the gate of **Q7** cause it to cycle on and off. When on, VBUS is grounded, shunting the stator through the diodes of MOSFETs **Q1-Q6**. When off, VBUS rises to pass current through **D1** and charge **C3**. The

start-up circuit **600** is disabled by pulling the CONTROL line low when the voltage across **C3** is sufficient for normal operation.

[0090] In certain embodiments, ultracapacitors are used in place of batteries. Ultracapacitors store energy in an electric field rather than a chemical reaction. Ultracapacitors provide the ability to survive many more charging and discharging events than batteries. FIG. **27** illustrates operation of a relay that can be used to control battery charging and that can also support the use of ultracapacitors. Still further, the operation shown in FIG. **27** provides for detection of a failed battery.

[0091] In operation, regulator **350** or ECU **400** controls a battery charge relay that selectively couples power to a chassis power output of regulator **350** (which supplies chassis loads **30**). The relay has an open state in which chassis loads **30** are disconnected from power and has a closed state in which chassis loads **30** are connected to power. Whenever the vehicle is powered down or the engine is not running, the relay is in the open configuration, block **710**. Upon vehicle startup, block **720**, the regulator **350** (or ECU **400**) receives an indication of battery voltage and chassis power output. These values are received, for example, either by directly measuring them, or via message over CAN.

[0092] The relay remains closed after startup, block **730**, until chassis power output is greater than or equal to the battery voltage (and the battery voltage is greater than zero), block **730**. It should be appreciated that this condition is expected to occur relatively quickly after startup. Once this condition is met, the relay is closed, block **750**. Once the relay is closed, power is delivered to the chassis load **30**. If the user ever stops the engine, block **760/765**, then the relay is opened, block **710** to await the next engine start.

[0093] While the relay is closed, the chassis output continues to be monitored. For so long as the Chassis Output does not drop below 12.8V for 300 seconds, block **770**, the relay remains closed, block **750**. However, if the chassis output drops below 12.8V for 300 seconds, block **770**, then the relay is opened for one second, block **780**. The chassis output is monitored during that time to see if the chassis voltage recovers quickly in response to the relay opening, block **790**. If it does not, then the relay remains open, and the system returns to block **740** to monitor the chassis output and battery voltage to close or open the relay as previously described. If the chassis output voltage recovers by 1.0V or greater at block **790**, then it is assumed that the battery is having a harmful effect on the chassis output voltage. Thus, a battery fault is noted and the relay remains open, block **795**. As such, chassis loads **30** are not permitted to drain the battery. Still further, a faulty battery is not able to drain power at the expense of chassis loads **30**. Finally, because the relay closes as soon as the chassis voltage rises to the battery voltage, there is no current spike therebetween. Such a setup provides for increased life of the electrical components linked by the relay. Also, this relay prevents discharge of the battery or ultracapacitor when the engine is stopped.

[0094] Referring to FIGS. **13A-B**, another exemplary power boost regulator **350** is illustrated according to an embodiment. Power boost regulator includes a three phase shunt regulator circuit **354** coupled to the output of a stator **352** and an interleaved DC-DC converter buck circuit **356** coupled to the output of circuit **354**. A single output stage **358** is illustratively coupled to the output of interleaved buck circuit **356**, such as for charging a vehicle battery, for

example. Shunt regulator circuit **354** is another exemplary type of boost rectifier circuit, also referred to as a half controlled boost rectifier, with switching elements only on the low side (phase to ground). Control logic **355** of shunt regulator circuit **354** may be provided with a microcontroller, such as microcontroller **128** of FIG. 7, for controlling functionality of circuit **354**.

[0095] Similar to buck circuit **306** of FIGS. 11A-B, interleaved buck circuit **356** of FIGS. 13A-B is operative to regulate the supply power to the proper point as determined by the load. Interleaved buck circuit **356** is further operative to reduce the amount of ripple in the output current. Each MOSFET switch **Q5-Q7** has a respective complementary MOSFET switch **Q6-Q8**, and the MOSFET switches operate in parallel with inductors **L1-L3**. In the illustrated embodiment, the duty cycle of the MOSFETs is fixed at $1/n$, where n is the number of parallel circuits (illustratively $n=3$). As such, one high-side MOSFET switch is on at a time, and when one MOSFET switch is turned off another MOSFET switch is turned on. Accordingly, one inductor is connected to the source (e.g., first stage output) at all times resulting in substantially constant input current and a reduction in required source capacitance. Interleaved buck circuit **356** is operative to simultaneously fix the buck duty cycle and provide a constant, regulated output voltage based on the load because voltage regulation is performed by varying the boost section duty cycle.

[0096] In one embodiment, the interleaved buck circuit **356** is used for a vehicle with a battery, and the single output **358** routes power for charging the battery. In another embodiment, a current steering circuit, such as circuit **308** of FIGS. 11A-B, is coupled to the output of buck circuit **356** for distributing power to loads of a vehicle with or without a battery.

[0097] In the illustrated embodiment, power boost regulator **24** of FIG. 1 (and exemplary regulators **300**, **350** of FIGS. 11 and 13) is operative to reduce the amount of shunting required due to the adjustment of the stator voltage at the boost circuit stage. In one embodiment, less shunting results in less heat generated. As described herein, power boost regulator **24** is operative to shunt excess power to external shunt resistor **408** (FIG. 12) such that the output voltage is not higher than the target load voltage. However, such shunting is substantially reduced compared to conventional charging systems due to the ability of power boost regulator **24** to change the voltage at which power is taken from AC power source **22** (FIG. 1) in the boosting circuit.

[0098] As an example, in a vehicle requiring 320 W power at 5800 RPM, power boost regulator **24** in one embodiment is operative to match the stator output to the load voltage by causing the stator to run at 109 V at 2.93 amps (A) to achieve the 320 W. However, a conventional power generator system having only shunt type regulation without power boost regulator **24** operates at or below the regulating voltage. For example, the stator in a conventional system may operate at 7 V and 45.7 A to achieve the 320 W power, which is 15 times more current and 240 times more resistive losses than the exemplary operating points provided with power boost regulator **24**.

[0099] FIG. 11D shows another exemplary regulator **360** that provides reduced part count, reduced heat generation, reduced package size, and reduced complexity relative to regulators **300**, **300'** of FIGS. 11 & 11A. Regulator **360** uses a different rectify/boost stage **304'** and provides a different

current steering circuit **308''** relative to steering circuits **308**, **308'** of the embodiments of FIGS. 11 & 11A. Steering circuit **308''** provides the same functionality as steering circuits **308**, **308'**. Circuit **308''** uses less transistors/MOSFETs (**Q8**, **Q9**) than circuits **308**, **308'**. This results in less heat generation and less space needs. Steering circuit **308''** shows, as an example, three outputs (to ECU, critical, and chassis loads). However, the design shown in FIGS. 11, 11A, and 11B can be expanded to handle additional loads. Such designs employing the concepts of steering circuit **308''** utilize $3*N$ diodes in the main current paths (**D2-10** in the shown example), where N =the number of outputs.

[0100] Alternative embodiments of a shunt regulator are illustrated in FIGS. 14 and 15. In the embodiments of FIGS. 14 and 15, a shunt regulator **450**, **452** is operative to provide regulated voltage to the ECU, fuel injectors, and other critical loads while automatically reducing the voltage applied to non-critical loads such as lights and handwarmers at low engine speeds. A single phase shunt regulator **450** of FIG. 14 includes a full-wave rectifier with diodes **D1-D4** and control circuitry **454** that regulates the output of a single phase stator winding **452**. A diode **T3** is a shunt device operative to shunt excess rectifier output to ground. A capacitor **C1** provides a smooth voltage to the critical loads.

[0101] Similarly, a three-phase shunt regulator **460** of FIG. 15 includes a three-phase rectifier and control circuitry **464** that regulates the output of a three-phase stator winding **462**. The three-phase rectifier is formed with diodes **D6-D12**, and diodes **T4-T6** are shunt devices operative to shunt excess rectifier output to ground. A capacitor **C2** provides a smooth voltage to the critical loads.

[0102] In operation, the percentage on-time of the respective shunt device and the non-essential devices of FIGS. 14 and 15 are adjusted to ensure constant voltage to the essential loads. At low engine speeds, the shunt device remains off and the non-essential device (e.g., light device, handwarmer, etc.) is modulated. When the non-essential device modulation reaches 100%, the shunt device is modulated to continue regulator the essential load voltage. FIG. 16 illustrates an exemplary control scheme **470** for shunt regulators **450**, **460** of FIGS. 13 and 14. At block **472**, the smoothing capacitor voltage is compared to a reference voltage. K_i , K_p , and the integral block **473** form a standard PI regulator **474**. The output range of the integrator of PI regulator **474** is clamped to between zero and two to reduce the likelihood of issues at light and maximum load. The Clamp $0 \dots 1$ block outputs the input value if the input is between the limits of zero and one, and otherwise it outputs the closest limit value of zero or one. The Clamp $1 \dots 2$ block outputs the input value if the input is between the limits of one and two, and otherwise it outputs the closest limit value of zero or one. The effect is that for control values between zero and one the non-essential devices are modulated while the shunt device stays off, and for control values between one and two the non-essential devices are on 100% of the time and the shunt device stays off. In some embodiments, the control scheme **470** of FIG. 16 is implemented as an analog circuit (e.g., control circuitry **454**, **464** of FIGS. 14 and 15) or as software in a microcontroller, for example.

[0103] In one embodiment, the shunt is located to dissipate current from the stator to an externally cooled surface, such as a surface of the engine assembly or other surface. In another embodiment, the shunt is located to dissipate current to the surface of the fuel tank of the vehicle.

[0104] Power supplied to outputs (such as ECU, Critical, and Chassis) varies through a pulse width modulation (PWM) cycle. This variability (FIG. 24) is referred to as voltage “ripple.” While some ripple is expected, relatively high amount of ripple can negatively impact engine performance. The ripple is calculated by taking multiple readings throughout the PWM cycle and then subtracting the minimum voltage from the maximum voltage, block 2500, FIG. 25. This value is then compared to a threshold of acceptable ripple, block 2510. When the measured ripple is below the threshold (in an acceptable range) the system resets a timer, block 2520, and continues to take readings and monitor the ripple.

[0105] The threshold is set to a value where the engine can still operate above the threshold. Such a setting provides that the ripple will exceed the threshold at a point before engine failure occurs. When the ripple exceeds the threshold, the system increments a timer, block 2530, and then checks to see if the timer indicates the passage of a sufficient amount of time, block 2540. This timer check determines if the ripple value is a transient over-threshold ripple or a sustained over-threshold ripple. Again, whenever the ripple is below the magnitude threshold, the timer gets reset, block 2520. When the timer is below a time threshold, the system again measures and calculates the ripple, block 2500. When the timer is above a threshold, thereby establishing a lasting nature to the out of specification ripple, a diagnostic code is triggered indicating trouble, block 2550. This diagnostic code indicates that the ripple is too high for a sustained period of time. This is likely indicative of failure of capacitors within the system that are used to stabilize outputs.

[0106] In addition to supplying power to the outputs (ECU, Critical, and Chassis), some amount of power is consumed by the regulator (300, 350, 360) itself. For efficiency, efforts are made to keep such power consumption low. Still further, operational faults can cause increases in power consumption of the regulator (300, 350, 360). With reference to FIG. 11C, in normal operation, C2-C4 have nearly constant voltage, i.e., equal charge is added and then removed each PWM cycle. Thus charge out of the Rectify/Boost stage 304 is fed either to the internal control electronics or one of the outputs. The average current out of the Rectify/Boost stage 304 is the current measured by measuring voltage across resistor R1 multiplied by the percent of time the Rectify/Boost stage 304 is not shunting.

[0107] All three outputs share a common ground connection, so the current through resistor R2 is the sum of the current delivered to the three outputs. Any charge delivered by the Rectify/Boost stage 304 and not delivered to the outputs is consumed internally to the regulator 360. This internal current consumption can be calculated from the calculated average Rectify/Boost output and the measured ground current. If this exceeds a predetermined threshold for a predetermined time, a diagnostic code is sent. Earlier detection of an internal power drain increases the likelihood any negative impact caused thereby is lessened.

[0108] Such internal power drains are one type of failure or degraded operation of PBR 300, 350, 360. PBR 300, 350, 360 is provided with a serial communication port(s) that provide for serial communication. Due to the PBR 300, 350, 360 having serial communication and the ability to detect internal or external faults of the Charging System. The PBR 300, 350, 360 is able to alert the system that a fault is detected. Thus, in the case of fault detection by the PBR 300,

350, 360, the PBR 300, 350, 360 is be able to react with the following control: 1) Send out diagnostic message that indicates to the system that there is a fault detected. 2) Send out the Diagnostic Message and Limit the chassis output (lowest priority output).

[0109] The diagnostic message further indicates a severity level of the detected fault. The system is then able to react in a manner appropriate for the severity of the detected fault. By the way of example, in one embodiment, the following severity levels are used:

[0110] Severity level 1: regulator limits Chassis power output (comfort reduced)

[0111] Severity level 2: ECU limits engine RPM or vehicle speed (performance reduced)

[0112] Severity level 3: ECU or regulator shuts down engine (loss of function)

[0113] Referring to FIG. 17, an illustrative embodiment of an engine 500 (e.g., engine 16 of FIG. 1) includes an engine head 502 coupled to an engine block 504. A power generation assembly 510 is coupled to a crankcase 506 of engine 500 and driven by the engine crankshaft 518 (FIG. 20). As illustrated in FIG. 18, power generation assembly 510 includes a housing 514, a shroud 516, and a magneto and starter assembly 512. Magneto and starter assembly 512 includes a recoil starter 520, a magneto 524, and a flywheel 522 coupled between magneto 524 and recoil starter 520. Flywheel 522 illustratively includes a plurality of circumferentially spaced blades 528 configured to draw air through the stator of magneto 524 during operation and through circumferentially spaced openings 530 of recoil starter 520. Alternatively, a separate air pump or fan may be coupled to assembly 512 for drawing air through assembly 512.

[0114] Certain embodiments of magneto and starter assembly 512 use a plurality of magnets disposed on a flywheel with alternating polarities. Movement of the magneto and starter assembly 512 induce eddy currents due to the relative motion of the magnets and current source. Eddy current losses are proportional to the square of the conductor area. FIG. 23A shows a typical magnet pole having a width W and a length L. In one embodiment, rather than providing a single magnet each magnet pole is divided into multiple pieces, FIG. 23B. The Eddy current power loss for the magnet of FIG. 23A is calculated as $Loss=K*(L*W)^2$. By using three magnets each having a width of $\frac{1}{3}$ of W, FIG. 23B, the calculated loss is calculated as $Loss=3*K*(L*W/3)^2$. Thus, the loss for the setup of FIG. 23B is $\frac{1}{3}$ of the loss for the setup of FIG. 23A.

[0115] Power loss manifests itself as heat. Thus reducing the loss reduces the total heat generation and maximum magnet temperature. Magnets have reduced performance at higher temperatures. Reducing power losses in the magnets reduces magnet temperature and thus increases output in steady-state conditions.

[0116] As illustrated in FIGS. 18, 19, and 22, shroud 516 includes a circumferential wall 532 configured to form a perimeter around flywheel 522. Wall 532 of shroud 516 includes radially extending regions 534, 536 that fit in corresponding cavities 552, 554 of housing 514. A circumferential flange portion 538 of shroud 516 is positioned on end or seat 550 of housing 514 such that flange portion 538 is coupled between housing 514 and crankcase 506 (FIG. 20). In another embodiment, shroud 516 is integral with crankcase 506. Housing 514 includes a plurality of spaced slots or openings 556 extending through the outside cover.

An inner wall 558 of housing 514 is substantially cylindrical and forms an opening to receive shroud 516 and magneto and starter assembly 512. FIG. 22 illustrates recoil starter 520 positioned in housing 514 between shroud 516 and the end cover of housing 514. Recoil starter 520 includes a plurality of circumferentially spaced openings 574 configured to route air flow received through flywheel through openings 556 of housing 514. A fastener 546 such as a bolt or screw is threaded through recoil starter 520 and into a bearing assembly 548 of housing 514 such that recoil starter 520 and flywheel 522 may rotate relative to housing 514. An opening 560 in housing 514 is configured to receive a pull-start cord of recoil starter 520. When the cord is pulled, the uncoiling rope spins recoil starter 520 to crank engine 500 (FIG. 17). After the cord is pulled, flywheel 522 keeps spinning and engine 500 starts.

[0117] Referring to FIG. 20, assembly 510 couples to crankcase 506 via a plurality of fasteners or bolts through housing 514. Magneto 524 includes a rotor 540 and a stator 542 having coil windings. Rotor 540 illustratively includes a permanent magnet 541 operative to rotate around coils of stator 542 to induce a voltage and current in the stator coils that is regulated by power boost regulator 24 (FIG. 1). Another suitable magneto, alternator, or electrical generator may be provided. A plurality of spaced openings 570 are formed in crankcase 506 behind magneto 524 (FIGS. 20 and 21).

[0118] Shroud 516 extends from the outer wall of crankcase 506 to the outer wall of magneto 524, thereby forcing air drawn through openings 570 behind magneto 524 to flow over the stator windings 542 and through openings in the flywheel 522. Shroud 516 thereby blocks or limits the intake air from openings 570 from flowing around the outside of stator 542 and flywheel 522. In operation, flywheel 522 or a separate fan or air pump draws air through openings 570 of crankcase 506 and over stator coils 542 of magneto 524. Shroud 516 blocks air flow around flywheel 522 causing the air to flow through openings in flywheel 522, openings 574 (FIG. 22) in recoil starter 520, and out openings 556 of housing 514.

[0119] In one embodiment, assembly 510 is operative to draw air from a cooler side of engine 500 behind magneto 524 and to outlet the air to a hotter side of engine 500, thereby facilitating cooling of magneto 524. For example, an exhaust system may be coupled adjacent recoil starter 520 which causes additional heat at that side of engine 500.

[0120] FIG. 30 shows an alternative embodiment flywheel 950. Flywheel 950 includes a circumferential wall 966 on which alternating magnetic poles 962, 964 are mounted. On the exterior of wall 966 is mounted a ferrous steel ring 958. The inner side of wall 966 has a non-magnetic stainless ring 952 mounted thereto. The wall 966 includes slots 956 therein. Flywheel 950 further includes ribs 968 extending from an end face and includes a plurality of holes in the end face. In operation, air (or oil) approaching flywheel 950 in direction 960 enters flywheel 950 via the holes in the end face (or otherwise) and is routed radially in the direction of arrows 954 with the aid of ribs 968. The air (or oil) enters slots 956 and exits the upper side (as oriented in FIG. 30). This configuration provides additional cooling to flywheel 950 and to the magnetic poles 962, 964. As previously noted, a controlled temperature proximate magnetic poles 962, 964 provides improved performance and consistency of performance relative to poles 962, 964 with elevated temperature.

[0121] As previously noted, PBR 300, 350, 360 includes serial communication. PBR 300, 350, 360 is able to sense internal temperatures, either directly via sensors, or indirectly via measurements indicating things such as degradation in performance. When the internal temperature reaches a set-point that is able to be calibrated, then the PBR 300, 350, 360 will send a CAN message to the ECU 400 that controls the fan 900. The ECU 400 will then turn on the fan until the PBR CAN message indicating elevated temperature is no longer active.

[0122] Referring to FIG. 31, an exemplary voltage monitoring system 1000 is shown. As shown in FIG. 31, power boost regulator 24 is coupled to a plurality of electrical loads 38 through at least one power output line 1002. Electrical loads 38 illustratively include an engine control unit (ECU) 1004, an ignition system 1006, and an injector system 1008. Other electrical loads are contemplated and disclosed herein. Engine control unit (ECU) 1004 controls ignition system 1006 and injector system 1008 through at least a first control line 1010 and a second control line 1012, respectively. In the illustrated embodiment, each of engine control unit (ECU) 1004, ignition system 1006, and injector system 1008 are connected to power boost regulator 24 through the same power output line 1002. In other embodiments, one or more of engine control unit (ECU) 1004, ignition system 1006, and injector system 1008 may be connected to power boost regulator 24 independently. In other embodiments, engine control unit (ECU) 1004 is connected to power boost regulator 24 through power output line 1002 and in turn provides power to ignition system 1006 and injector system 1008.

[0123] A voltage sense line 1020 is coupled to a high side of the fuel injector system 1008 at a location remote from power boost regulator 24. An external voltage sense circuit 1030 of power boost regulator 24 monitors the voltage at the high side of the fuel injector system 1008. The monitored voltage is compared to a desired voltage and is used by power boost regulator 24 to control AC power source 22 to provide a target voltage level and a target current level as disclosed herein. Advantages, among others, for monitoring the voltage at the highest priority load, illustratively injector system 1008, and using that monitored voltage to control AC power source 22 are a reduction in voltage ripple at the highest priority load, higher performance, and lower emissions.

[0124] Power boost regulator 24 further includes an internal voltage sense circuit 1032 which monitors a voltage over line 1038 being output by power boost regulator 24 to power output line 1002 through a first connector interface 1040. Exemplary connector interfaces include plugs, screws, and other devices for making an electrical connection. In one embodiment, if the voltage monitored over external voltage sense line 1020 is below a first threshold then power boost regulator substitutes the voltage monitored by internal voltage sense circuit 1032 for the voltage monitored by the external voltage sense circuit in the control of AC power source 22. An exemplary first threshold is 2 volts (V). In this manner, the voltage monitored over line 1038 provides continued operation of power boost regulator in a scenario wherein sense line 1020 has been disconnected or otherwise damaged.

[0125] As shown in FIG. 31, sense line 1020 is coupled to power boost regulator 24 through a second connector interface 1050 which is spaced apart from first connector inter-

face **1040**. Exemplary connector interfaces include plugs, screws, and other devices for making an electrical connection.

[0126] While this invention has been described as having an exemplary design, the present invention may be further modified within the spirit and scope of this disclosure. This application is therefore intended to cover any variations, uses, or adaptations of the invention using its general principles. Further, this application is intended to cover such departures from the present disclosure as come within known or customary practice in the art to which this invention pertains.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of electrical power generation in a vehicle, the method including:

receiving, by a power boost regulator, alternating current (AC) power from an AC generator coupled to an output of an engine of a vehicle, a speed of the engine varying during an operation of the vehicle;

providing, by the power boost regulator, an output direct current (DC) power for use by an electrical system of the vehicle;

monitoring, remote from the power boost regulator, a voltage input to a first electrical load of a plurality of electrical loads of the vehicle;

controlling, by the power boost regulator, the AC generator to generate the AC power at a target current level and a target voltage level based on the monitored voltage input to the first electrical load of the plurality of electrical loads of the electrical system of the vehicle.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein the step of providing, by the power boost regulator, the direct current (DC) power for use by the electrical system of the vehicle includes the steps of converting the received alternating current (AC) power to a first direct current (DC) power and boosting the first direct current (DC) power to provide the output direct current (DC) power.

3. The method of claim **2**, further comprising the step of determining, by an electronic controller of the power boost regulator, a target current level and a target voltage level of the alternating current (AC) power output by the AC generator based on a rotational speed of the engine.

4. The method of claim **2**, further comprising the step of selectively distributing, by a current steering stage of the power boost regulator, the output direct current (DC) power to the first electrical load and a second electrical load of the plurality of electrical loads of the electrical system of the vehicle based on a priority distribution schedule.

5. The method of claim **4**, wherein the first electrical load of a plurality of electrical loads of the vehicle has a highest priority in the priority distribution schedule.

6. The method of claim **1**, wherein the first electrical load is a fuel injection system controlled by an engine controller and the monitored voltage input is a high side voltage of the injector.

7. The method of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of electrical loads of the electrical system of the vehicle includes an engine controller, at least one pump, and at least one chassis load.

8. The method of claim **7**, further including, in response to a startup event of the engine, distributing the output direct

current (DC) power to the engine controller prior to distributing power to the at least one pump and the at least one chassis load.

9. The method of claim **8**, further including distributing output direct current (DC) power to the at least one pump in response to the power to the engine controller exceeding a power level threshold.

10. The method of claim **8**, further including distributing output direct current (DC) power to the at least one chassis load in response to the power to the engine controller exceeding a first power level threshold and the power to the at least one pump exceeding a second power level threshold.

11. The method of claim **7**, wherein the startup event includes a manual recoil start by an operator.

12. The method of claim **7**, wherein the engine controller has a higher priority than the at least one pump, and the at least one pump has a higher priority than the at least one chassis load.

13. The method of claim **7**, wherein the at least one pump includes a fuel pump and an oil pump, and the at least one chassis load includes at least one of a taillight, a handwarmer device, and a power relay for vehicle accessories.

14. The method of claim **1**, further comprising the steps of:

monitoring an internal voltage of the power boost regulator at an output of the power boost regulator, the output of the power boost regulator being coupled to the electrical system of the vehicle;

controlling, by the power boost regulator, the AC generator to generate the AC power at the target current level and the target voltage level based on the monitored internal voltage of the power boost regulator when the voltage input to the first electrical load of the plurality of electrical loads of the electrical system of the vehicle has a first characteristic.

15. The method of claim **14**, wherein the first characteristic is being below a first threshold value.

16. The method of claim **14**, further comprising the steps of:

coupling the electrical system of the vehicle to a first connector interface of the power boost regulator, the power boost regulator providing the output direct current (DC) power through the first connector interface; and

coupling a sense line to a second connector interface of the power boost regulator, the monitored voltage input to the first electrical load of the plurality of electrical loads of the vehicle being received by the power boost regulator through the second connector interface, the second connector interface being spaced apart from the first connector interface.

17. A vehicle for riding by a rider, the vehicle including: a chassis;

a front suspension coupled to the chassis;

a pair of front skis coupled to the front suspension;

an endless track assembly coupled to the chassis including an endless belt;

a straddle seat supported by the chassis for supporting an operator;

an engine supported by the chassis and providing power to the endless track assembly;

an electrical system supported by the chassis and operatively coupled to the engine to control an operation of the engine, the electrical system including a plurality of electrical loads;

an alternating current (AC) generator operatively coupled to the engine to generate alternating current (AC) power; and

a power boost regulator operatively coupled to the alternating current (AC) generator to rectify the alternating current (AC) power and to boost the alternating current (AC) power to provide an output direct current (DC) power, the power boost regulator configured to monitor, remote from the power boost regulator, a voltage input to a first electrical load of the plurality of electrical loads of the electrical system and to control the alternating current (AC) generator to generate the alternating current (AC) power at a target current level and a target voltage level based on the monitored voltage input to the first electrical load of the plurality of electrical loads of the electrical system.

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