US 20250257963A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2025/0257963 A1**

BOMBAUGH, JR. et al. (43) **Pub. Date: Aug. 14, 2025**

(54) **SYSTEMS AND METHODS TO MAKE SAFE A HANDGUN**

(71) Applicant: **Bombach Solutions LLC**, Parrish, FL (US)

(72) Inventors: **Keith D. BOMBAUGH, JR.**, Dunedin, FL (US); **Benjamin R. PAUZA**, Champaign, IL (US)

(73) Assignee: **Bombach Solutions LLC**, Parrish, FL (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **19/054,005**

(22) Filed: **Feb. 14, 2025**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 18/223,253, filed on Jul. 18, 2023, now Pat. No. 12,228,357, which is a continuation of application No. 17/570,995, filed on Jan. 7, 2022, now Pat. No. 11,768,046.

(60) Provisional application No. 63/135,707, filed on Jan. 10, 2021.

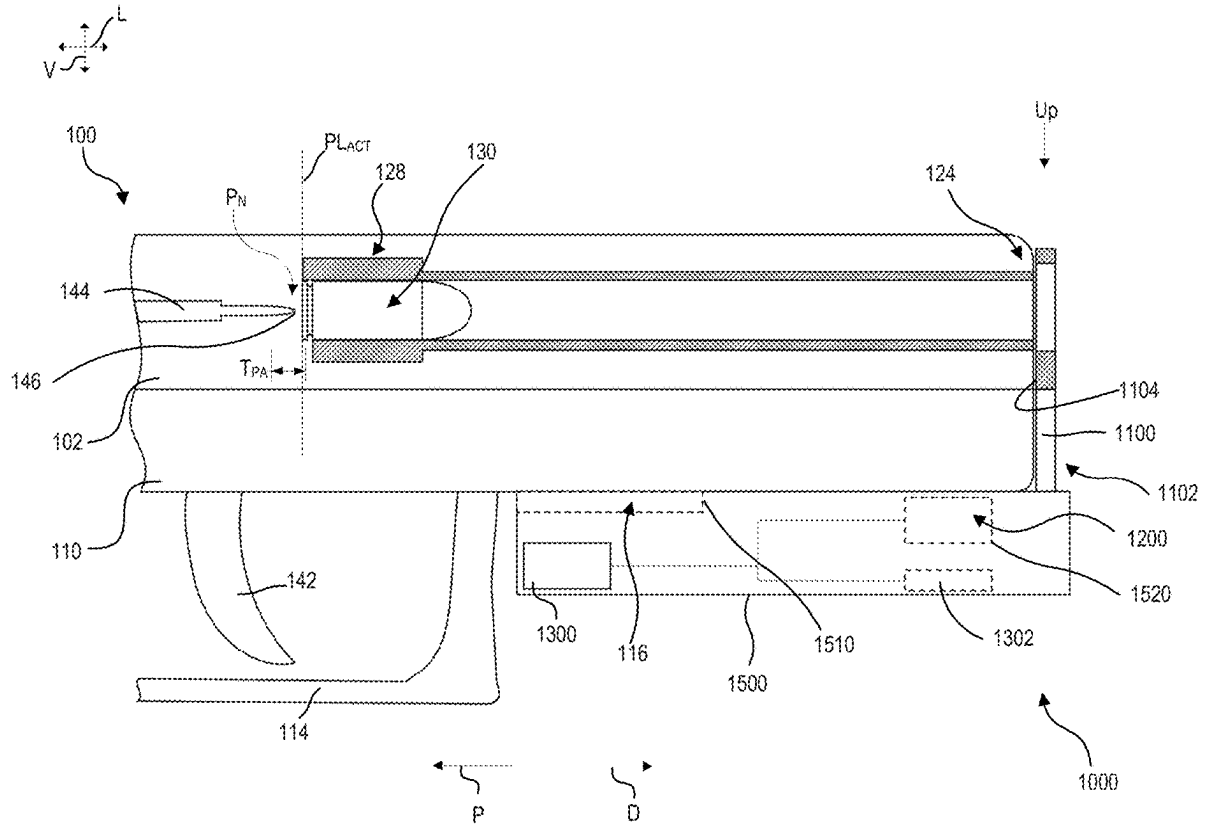
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
F41A 17/06 (2006.01)
F41A 17/02 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***F41A 17/06*** (2013.01); *F41A 17/02* (2013.01); *F41A 17/063* (2013.01); *F41A 17/066* (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Systems and methods are provided for the making safe of a handgun. A safety system includes a lock mechanism coupled to an engagement member and a user interface. The engagement member is movably coupled to the handgun and includes a contact face that is in contact with the slide of the handgun. The engagement member transfers a portion of a force to the slide and moves between a lock position and an unlock position. The lock position corresponds to a separation distance between a distal end of a primer actuator of the handgun and a primer activation plane. The engagement member is configured to transition between the lock position and the unlock position while remaining movably coupled to the handgun. Movement of the engagement member from the lock position is restricted by the lock mechanism until disengaged via the user interface.



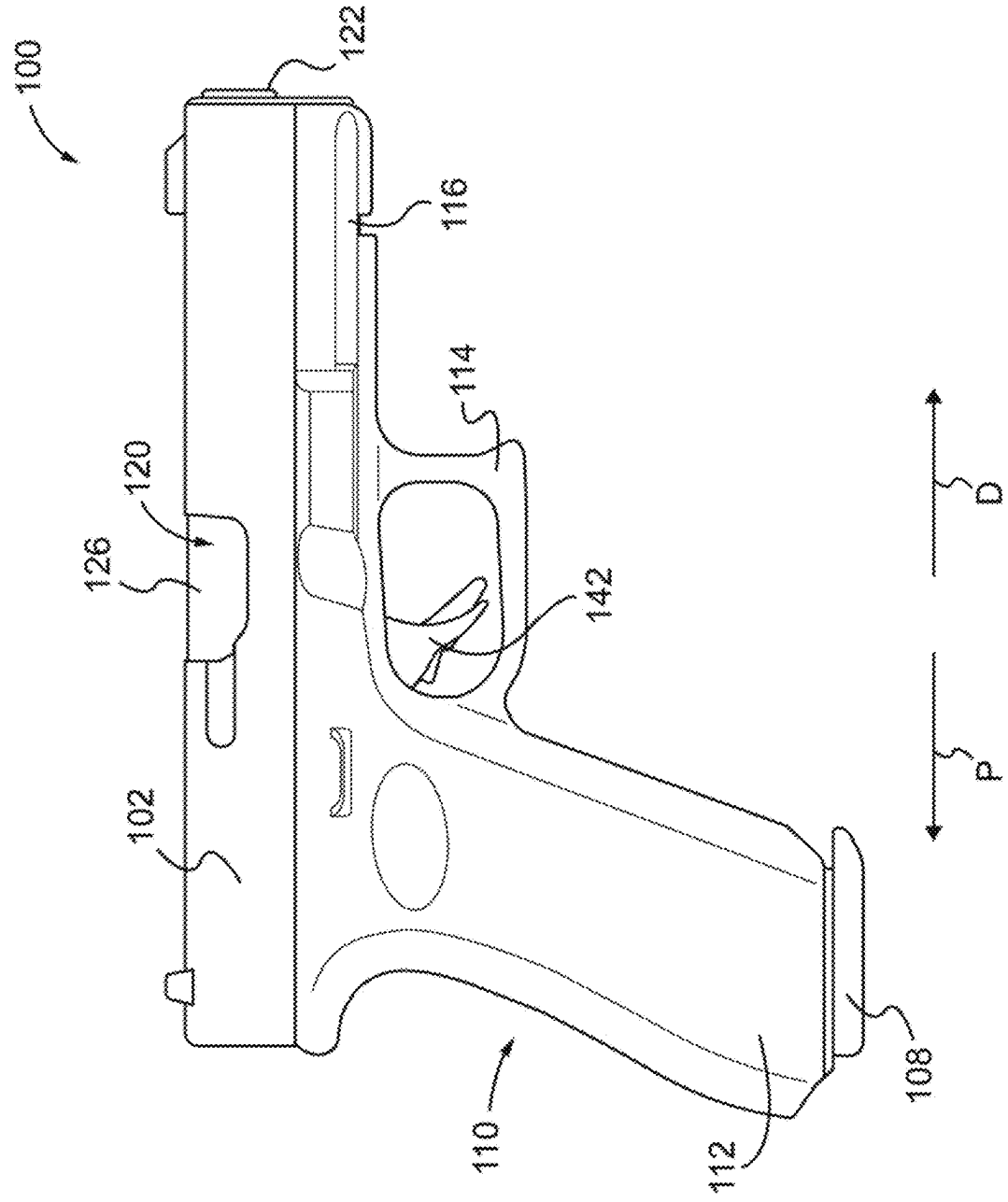


FIG. 1

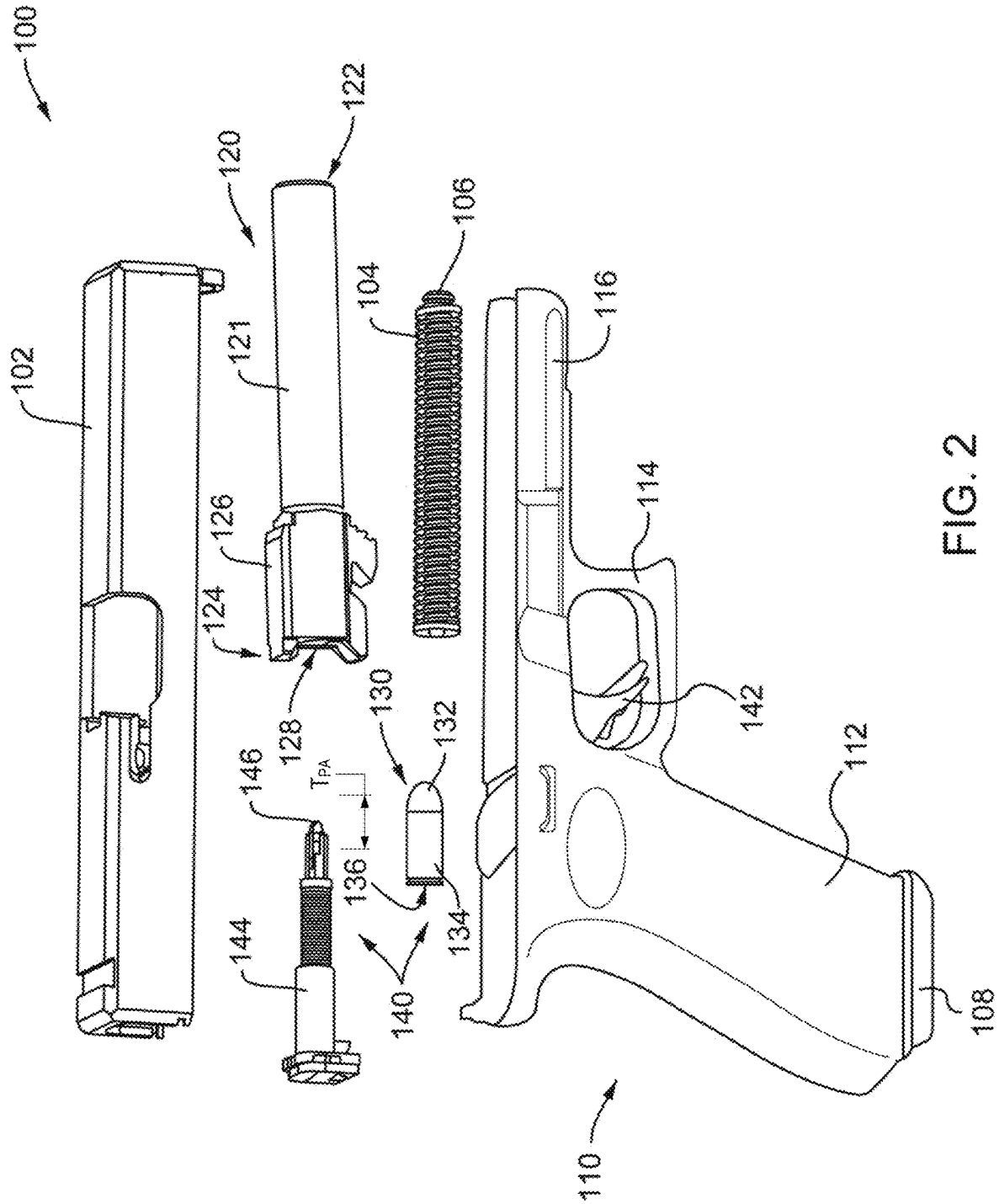

100
102
120
122
121
104
106
116
126
124
114
128
130
132
142
146
T_{PA}
112
136
144
134
140
108
110

FIG. 2

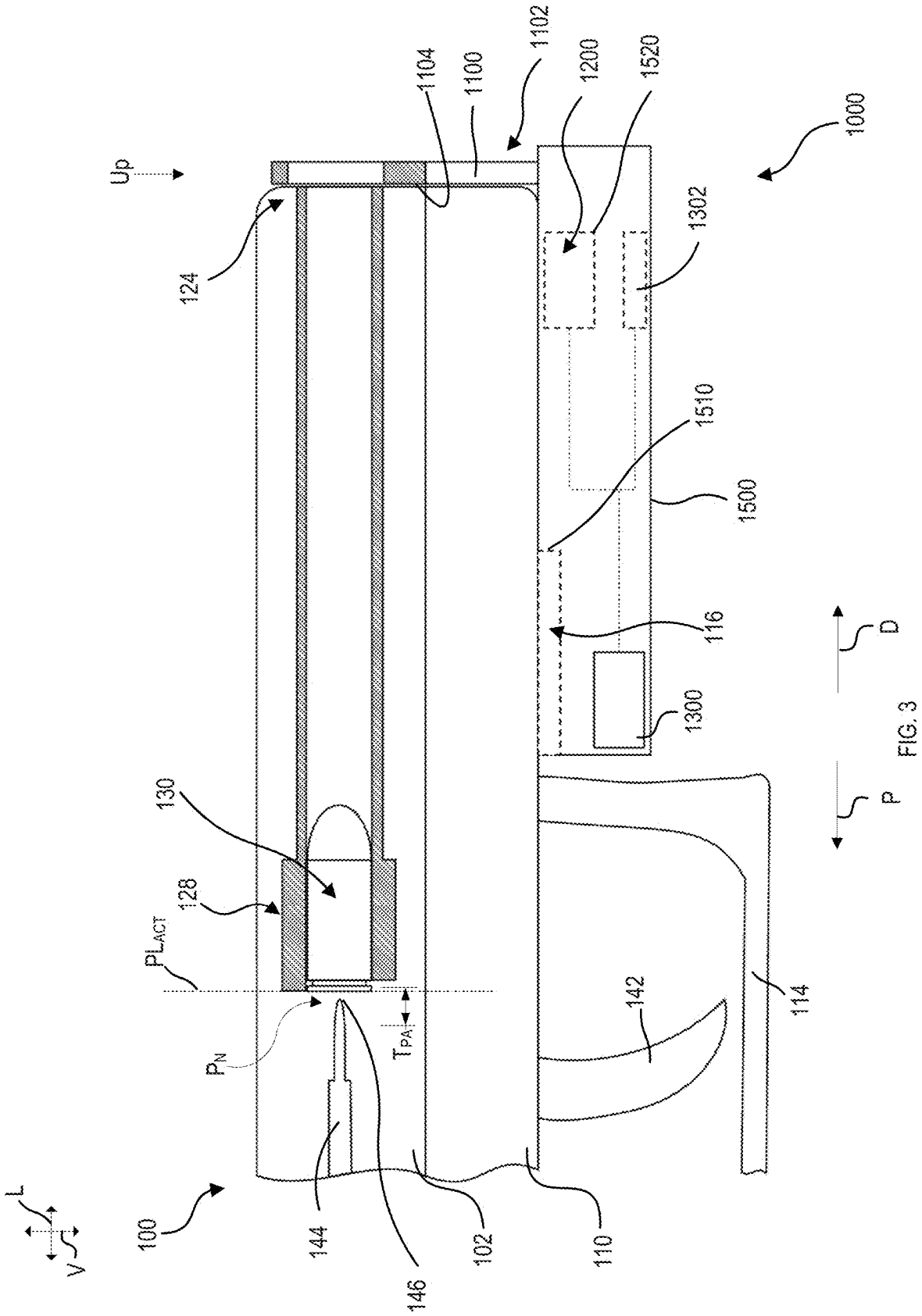

Up
1104
1100
1102
1200
1520
1000
124
1302
1510
1500
116
1300
D
P
130
128
PLACT
PN
TPA
142
114
144
146
102
110
100
L
V

FIG. 3

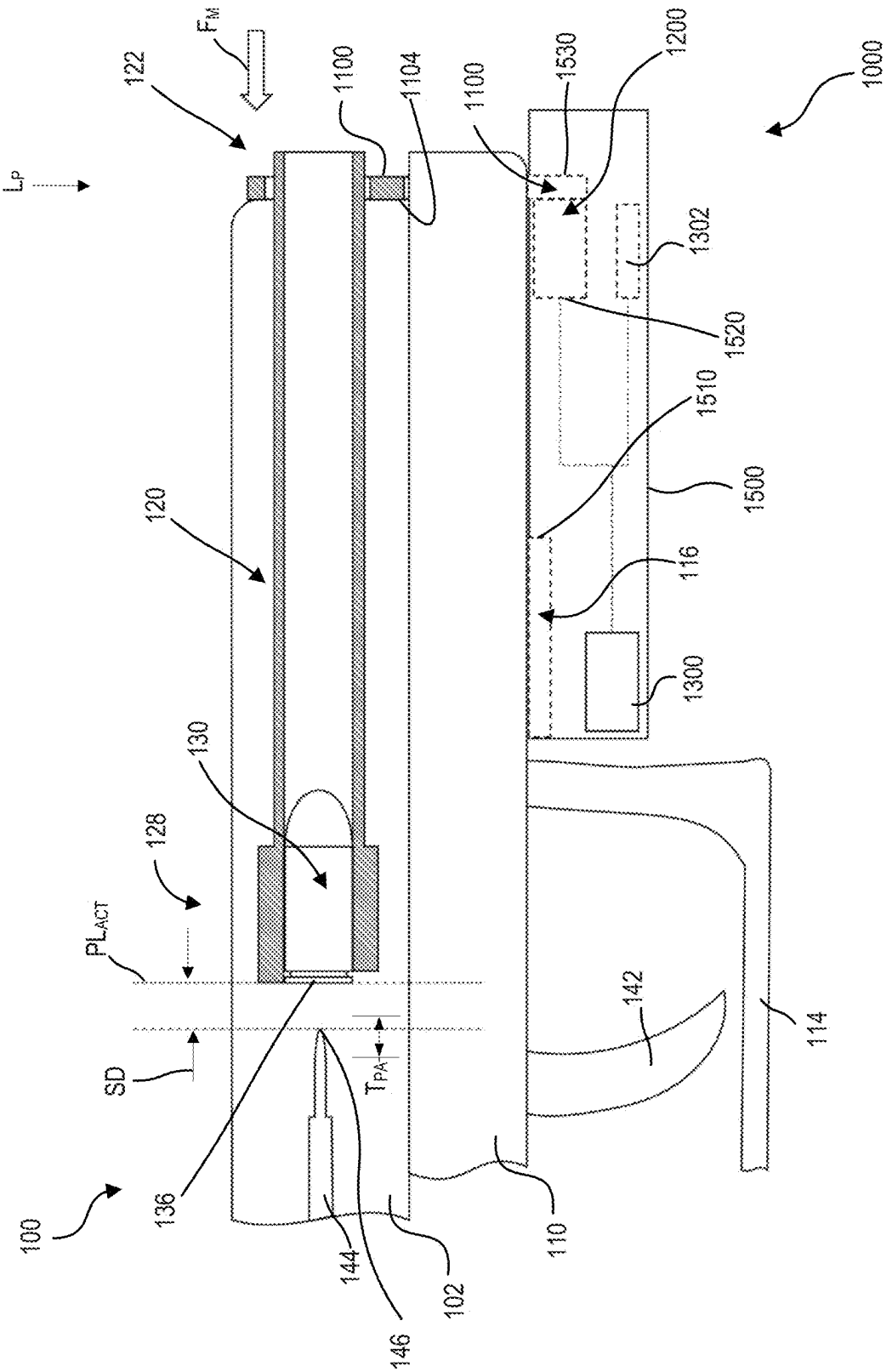

F_M
122
1100
1104
1100
1530
1200
1000
L_P
1302
1520
1510
1500
120
116
1300
130
128
PL_{ACT}
142
114
SD
T_{PA}
100
136
144
102
110
146

FIG. 4

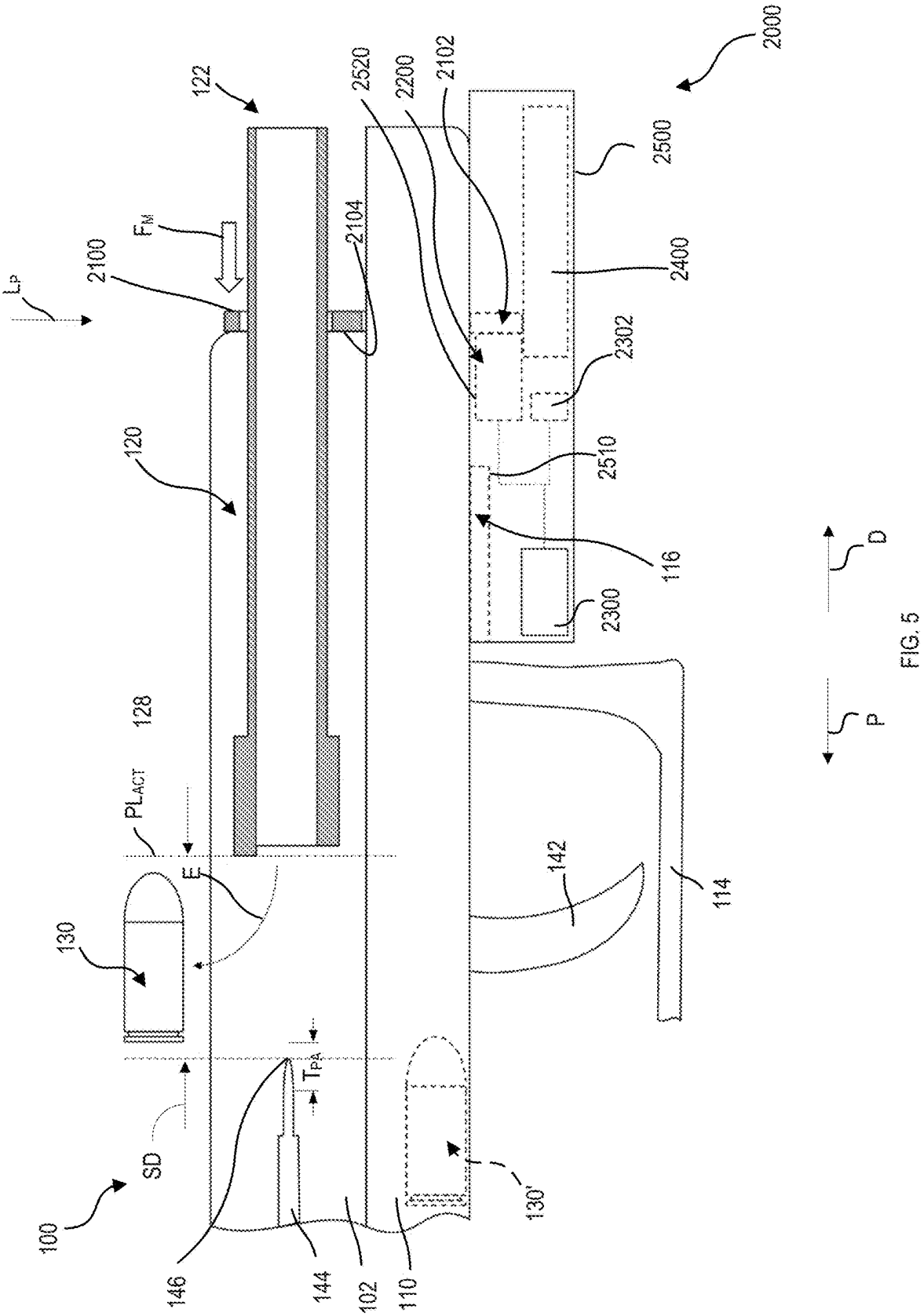

2000
2500
2520
2200
2102
122
2104
F_M
2100
L_P
2400
2302
120
2510
116
2300
128
PL_{ACT}
142
114
E
130
T_{PA}
SD
130'
100
146
144
102
110
D
P

FIG. 5

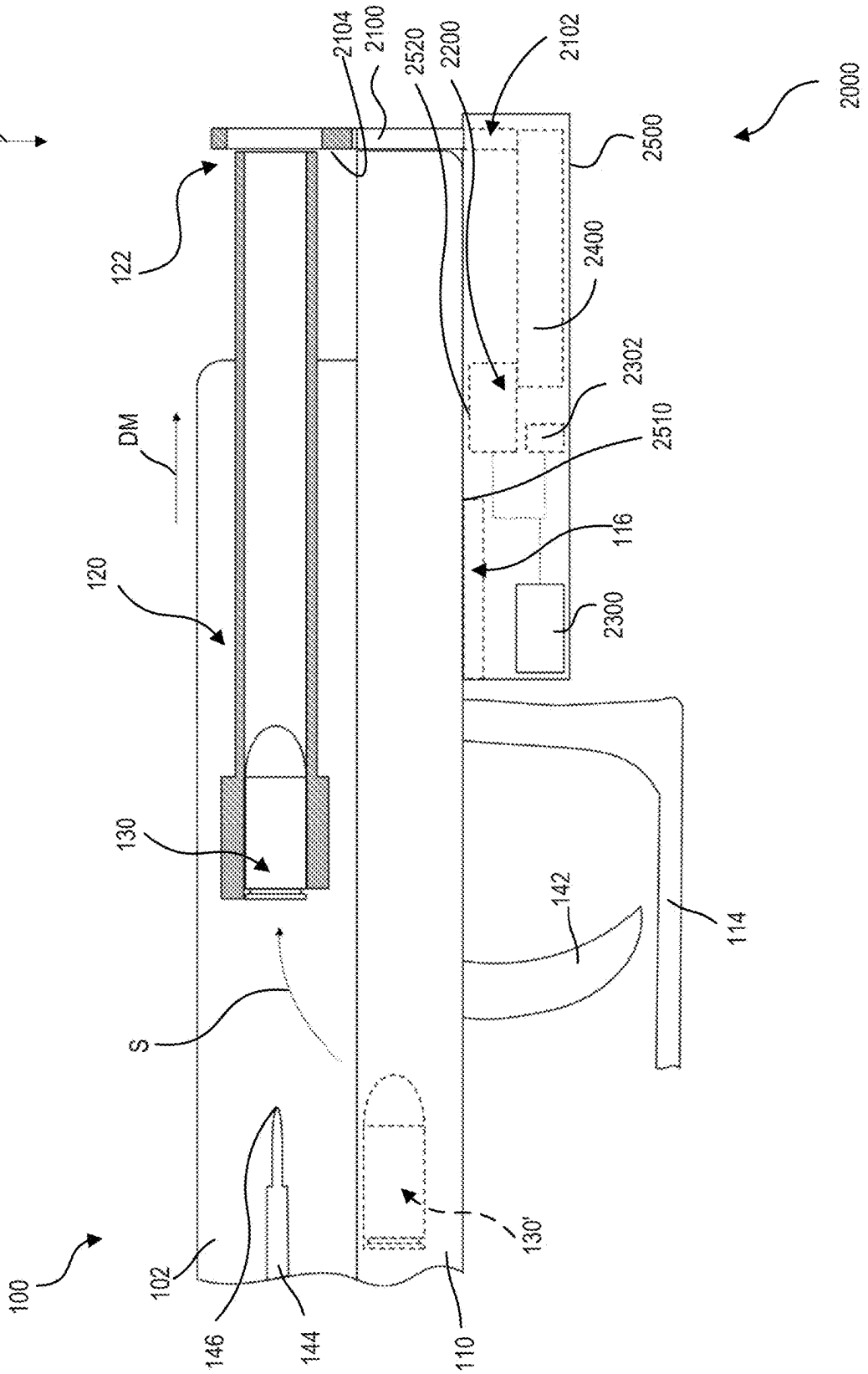

Up
2104
2100
2520
2200
2102
2000
2500
122
2400
2302
DM
2510
116
120
2300
130
142
114
S
130'
102
100
146
144
110

FIG. 6

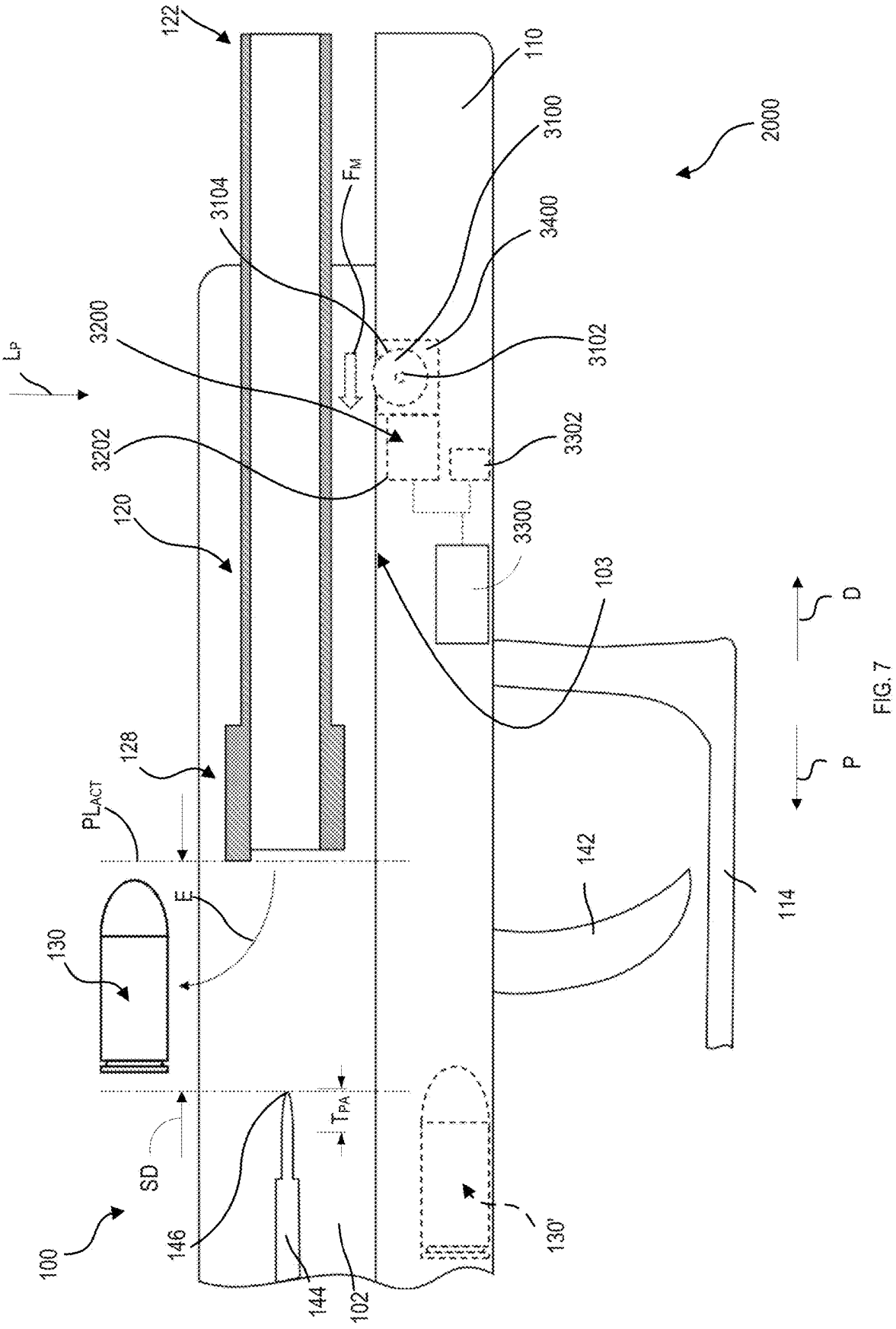

122
110
2000
3100
3104
F_M
3400
3200
3102
L_P
3202
3302
120
3300
103
D
P
128
PL_{ACT}
142
114
E
130
T_{PA}
SD
146
100
144
102
130'

FIG. 7

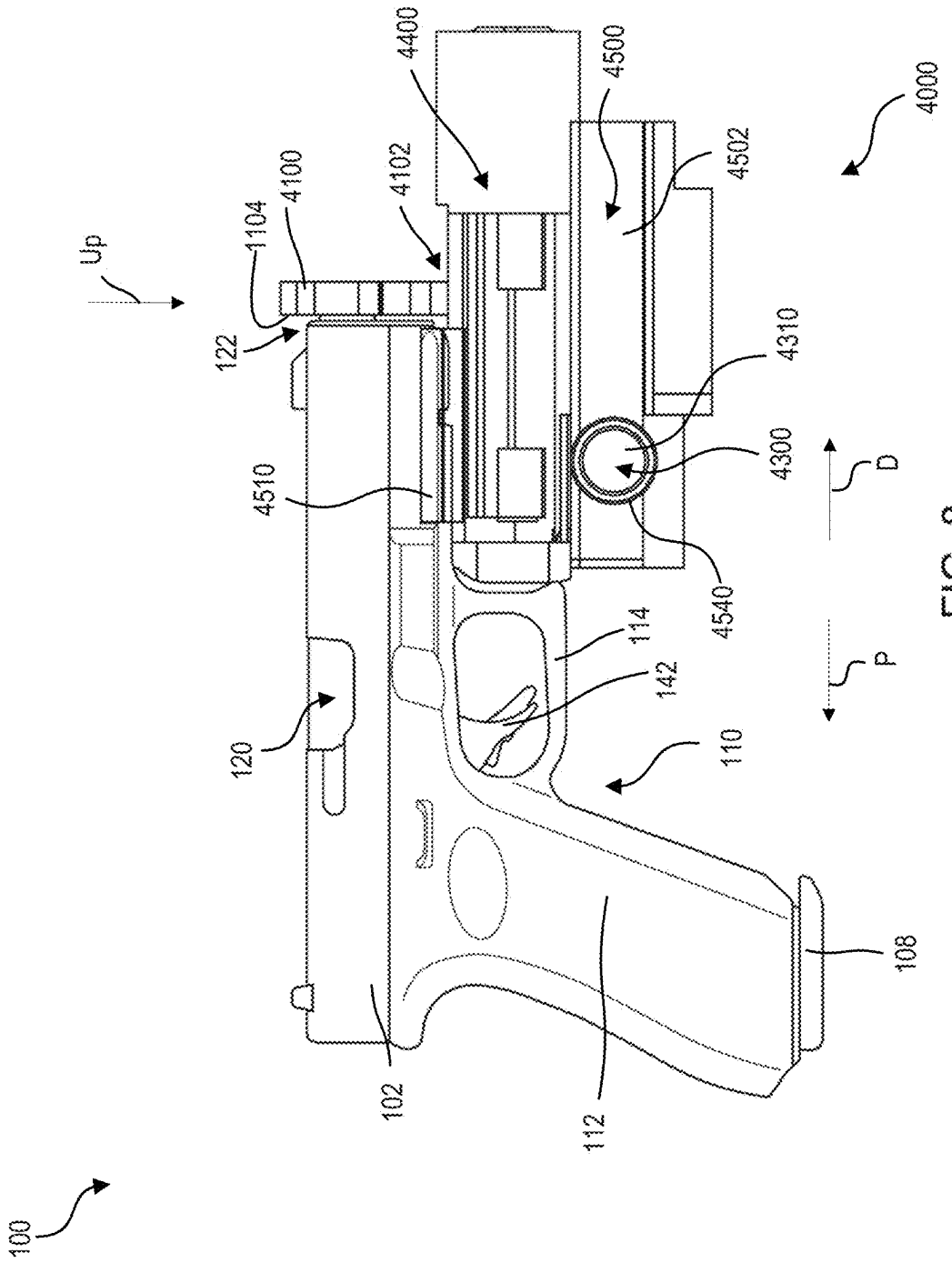

100
Up
122
1104
4100
4102
4400
4500
4502
4000
4310
4300
4510
4540
D
P
114
142
120
110
108
102
112

FIG. 8

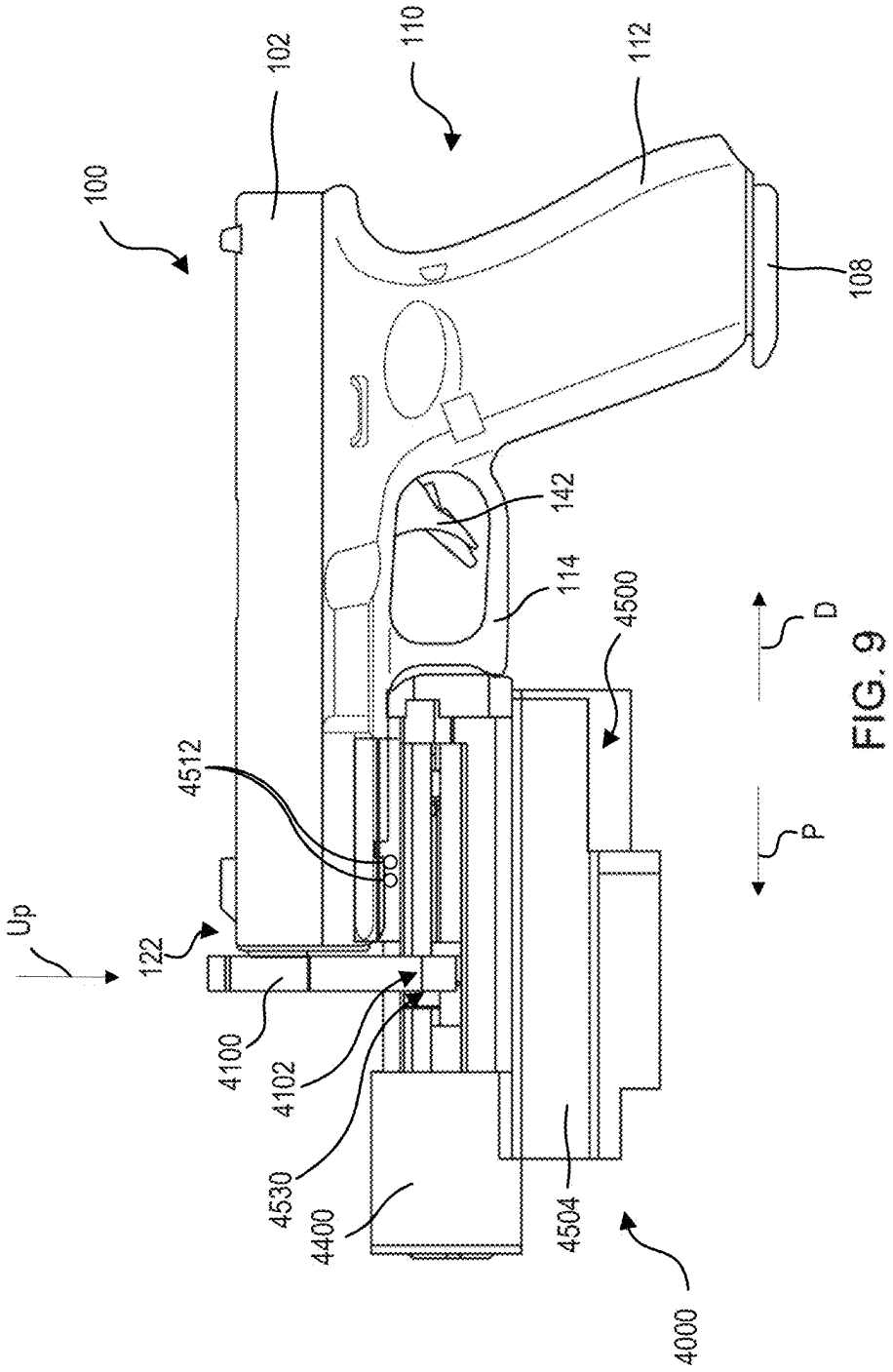

100
102
110
112
108
142
114
4500
4512
Up
122
4100
4102
4530
4400
4504
4000
D
P

FIG. 9

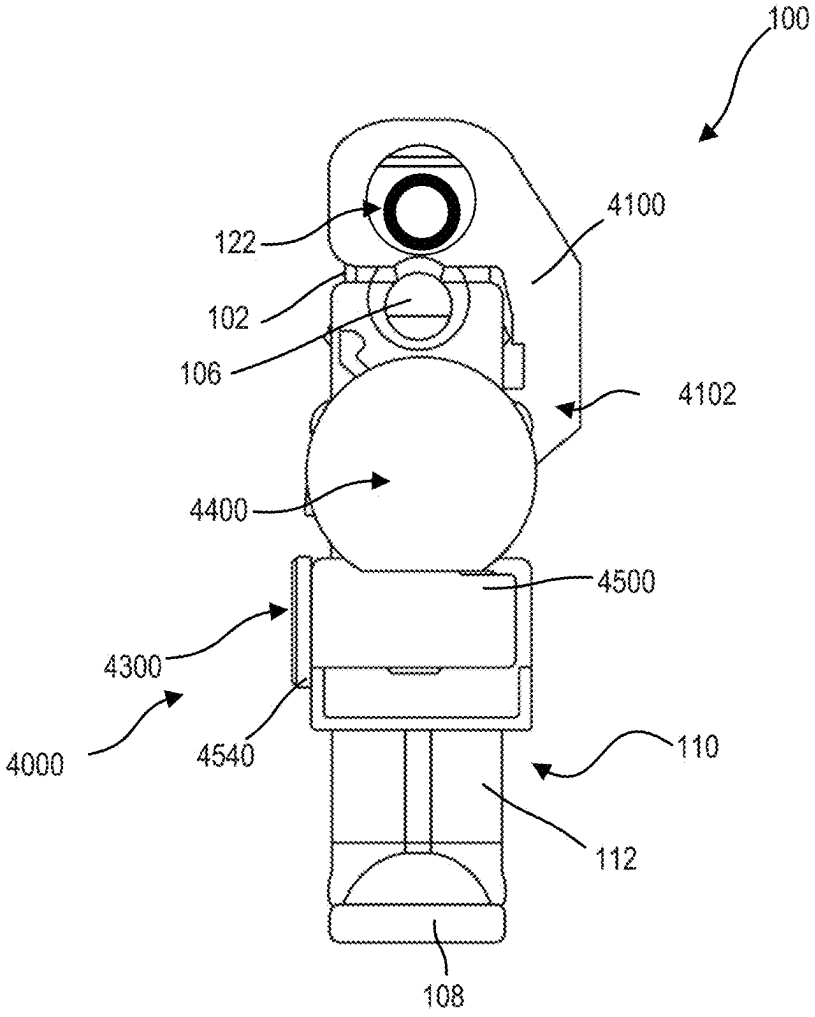


FIG. 10

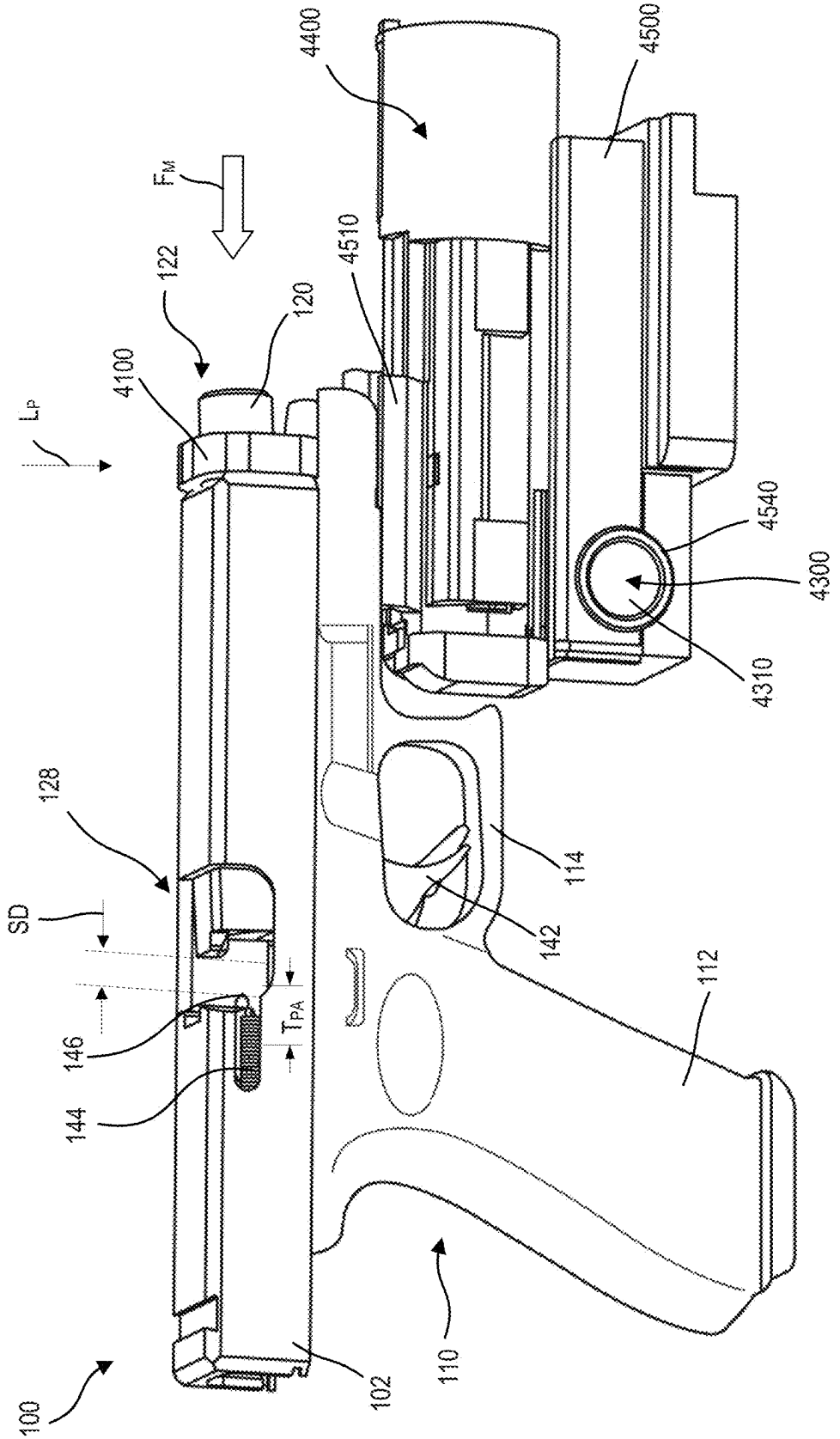

4400
4500
4000
F_M
4510
122
120
4100
L_P
4540
4300
4310
128
114
SD
142
112
146
T_{PA}
144
100
102
110

FIG. 11

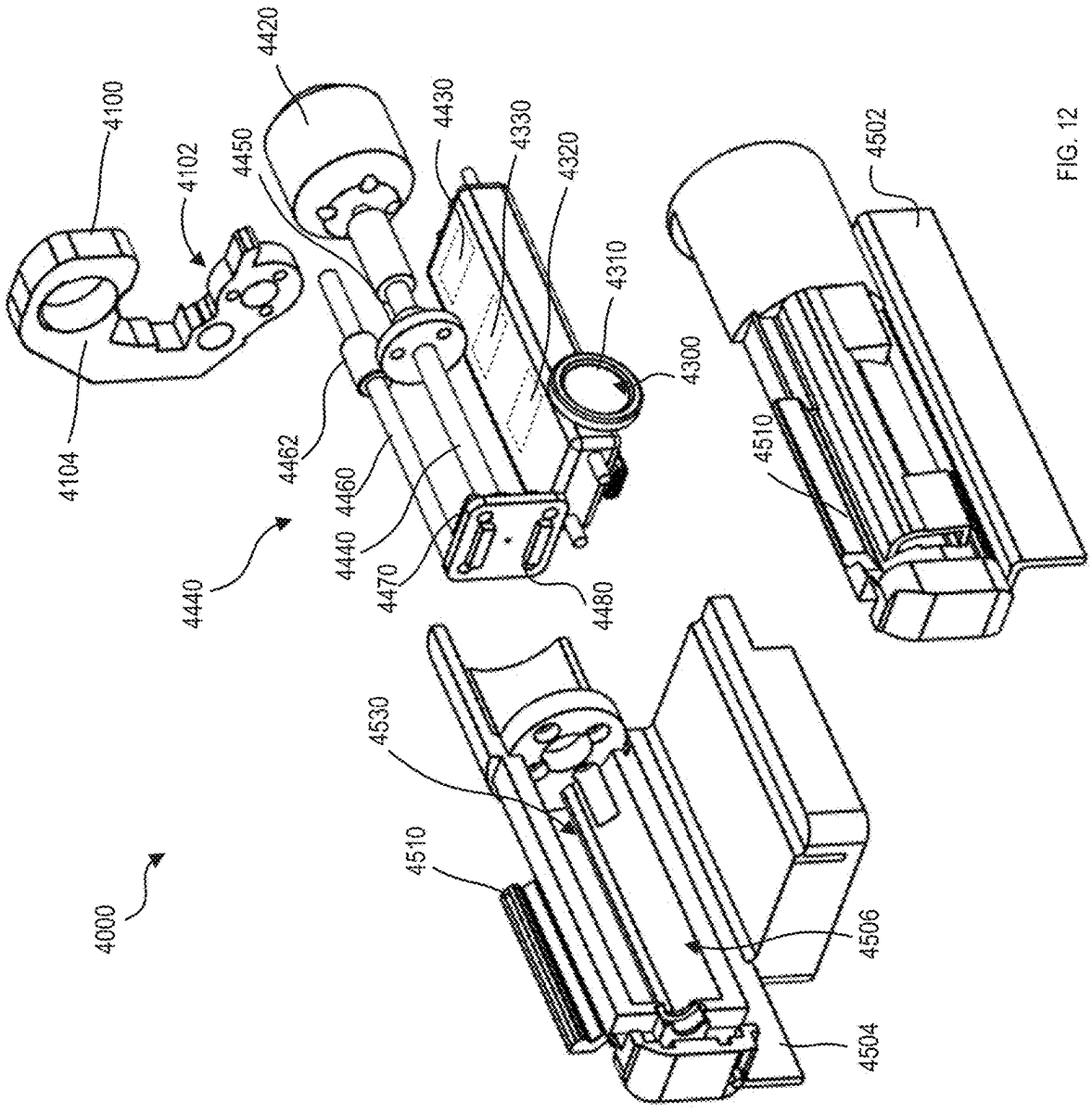

4000
4100
4102
4104
4420
4450
4462
4430
4330
4320
4310
4300
4460
4440
4470
4480
4440
4502
4510
4530
4510
4506
4504

FIG. 12

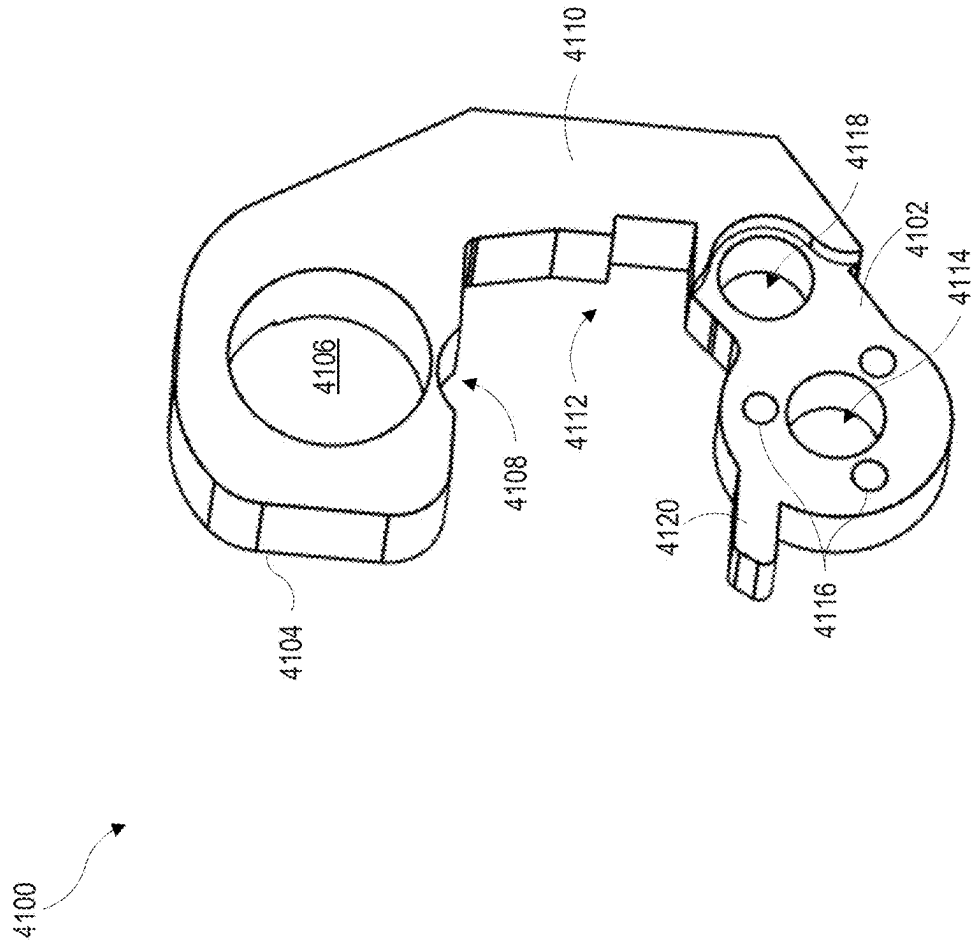


FIG. 13

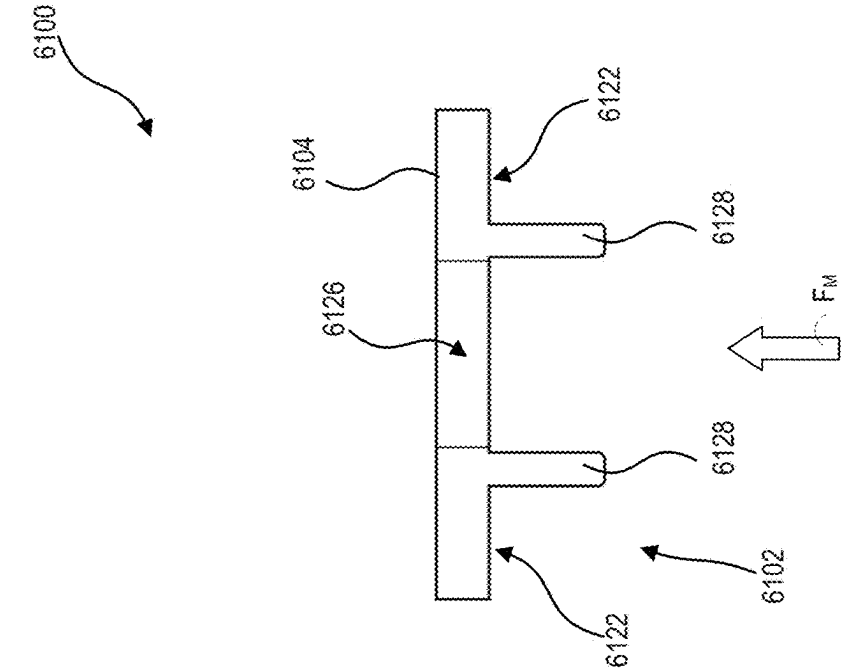

6100
6104
6122
6128
6126
F_M
6128
6102
6122

FIG. 15

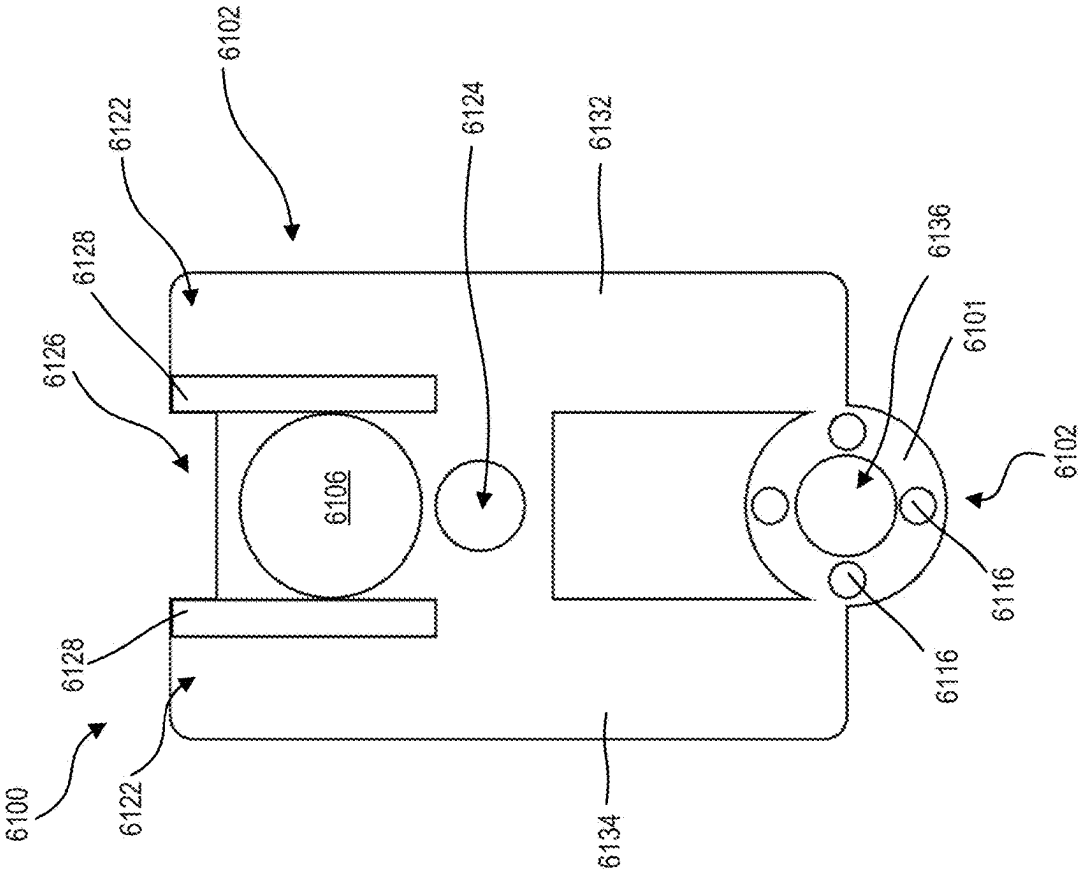

6102
6122
6124
6132
6128
6136
6126
6101
6106
6102
6128
6116
6116
6100
6122
6134

FIG. 14

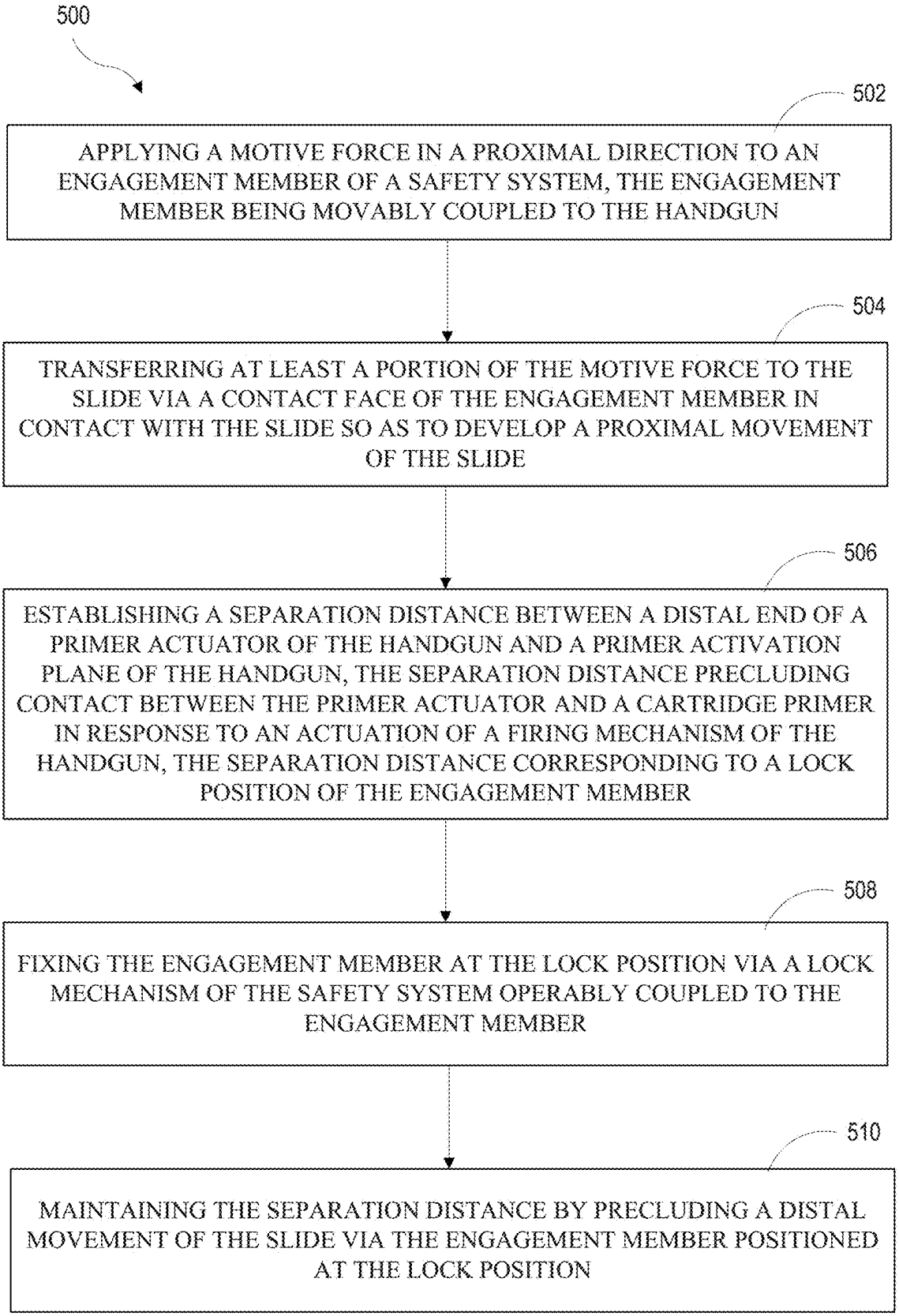

500
502
APPLYING A MOTIVE FORCE IN A PROXIMAL DIRECTION TO AN ENGAGEMENT MEMBER OF A SAFETY SYSTEM, THE ENGAGEMENT MEMBER BEING MOVABLY COUPLED TO THE HANDGUN
504
TRANSFERRING AT LEAST A PORTION OF THE MOTIVE FORCE TO THE SLIDE VIA A CONTACT FACE OF THE ENGAGEMENT MEMBER IN CONTACT WITH THE SLIDE SO AS TO DEVELOP A PROXIMAL MOVEMENT OF THE SLIDE
506
ESTABLISHING A SEPARATION DISTANCE BETWEEN A DISTAL END OF A PRIMER ACTUATOR OF THE HANDGUN AND A PRIMER ACTIVATION PLANE OF THE HANDGUN, THE SEPARATION DISTANCE PRECLUDING CONTACT BETWEEN THE PRIMER ACTUATOR AND A CARTRIDGE PRIMER IN RESPONSE TO AN ACTUATION OF A FIRING MECHANISM OF THE HANDGUN, THE SEPARATION DISTANCE CORRESPONDING TO A LOCK POSITION OF THE ENGAGEMENT MEMBER
508
FIXING THE ENGAGEMENT MEMBER AT THE LOCK POSITION VIA A LOCK MECHANISM OF THE SAFETY SYSTEM OPERABLY COUPLED TO THE ENGAGEMENT MEMBER
510
MAINTAINING THE SEPARATION DISTANCE BY PRECLUDING A DISTAL MOVEMENT OF THE SLIDE VIA THE ENGAGEMENT MEMBER POSITIONED AT THE LOCK POSITION

FIG. 16

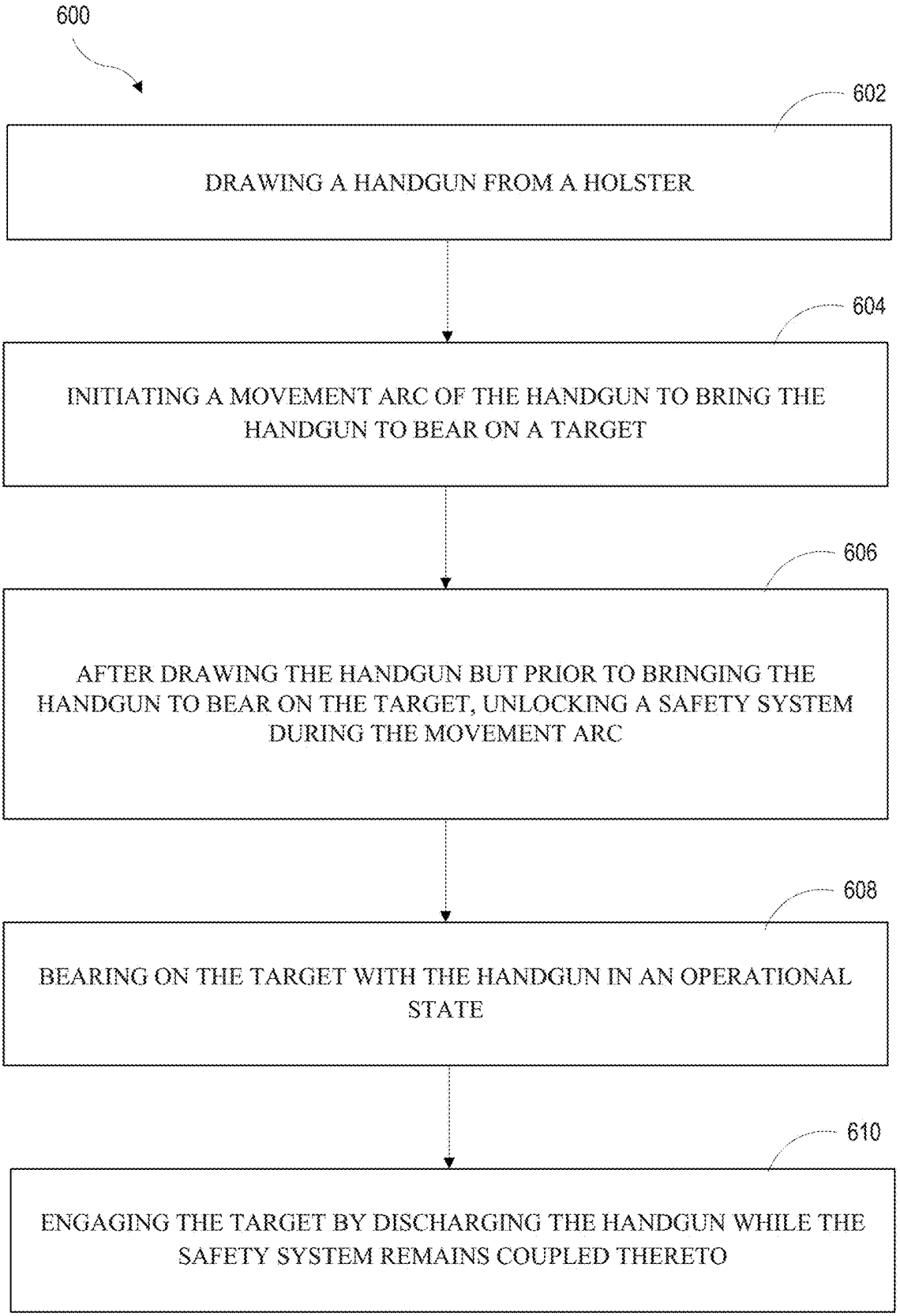

600
602
DRAWING A HANDGUN FROM A HOLSTER
604
INITIATING A MOVEMENT ARC OF THE HANDGUN TO BRING THE HANDGUN TO BEAR ON A TARGET
606
AFTER DRAWING THE HANDGUN BUT PRIOR TO BRINGING THE HANDGUN TO BEAR ON THE TARGET, UNLOCKING A SAFETY SYSTEM DURING THE MOVEMENT ARC
608
BEARING ON THE TARGET WITH THE HANDGUN IN AN OPERATIONAL STATE
610
ENGAGING THE TARGET BY DISCHARGING THE HANDGUN WHILE THE SAFETY SYSTEM REMAINS COUPLED THERETO

FIG. 17

SYSTEMS AND METHODS TO MAKE SAFE A HANDGUN

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/223,253, filed Jul. 18, 2023, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/570,995, filed Jan. 7, 2022, both of which are entitled Systems and Methods to Make Safe a Handgun, which claims priority to and the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 63/135,707, filed Jan. 10, 2021, entitled "Bombach External Firearm Safety," the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

BACKGROUND

[0002] The embodiments described herein relate to firearms, and more specifically to handguns. More particularly, the embodiments described herein relate to systems and methods for securing a handgun.

[0003] In order to prevent the unauthorized or accidental discharge of a firearm, the firearm is typically made safe. Safing the firearm establishes the firearm in a safe condition, versus a state of readiness. To make the firearm safe, the firearm may be equipped with a lock and/or secured within a locking container.

[0004] A general approach to safing a firearm is to secure a fully functional firearm in a secure container, such as a safe or a lockbox. To access and employ the firearm, an authorized user must typically unlock the secure container via a combination, a mechanical key, a magnetic key, an electronic key, a biometric identifier, and/or other similar means. While this approach is generally an effective way to secure a fully functional firearm, the secure container is often placed in a single, fixed location. Such a location may not coincide with a desired deployment location of the firearm. Thus, the location may limit access to the firearm in an exigent situation. Additionally, the amount of time required to open the secure container (e.g., via the entry of the code or the locating and employment of the key) may be significantly greater than desired during an emergency. Therefore, it may be desirable to employ systems and methods that facilitate the securing of a firearm in such a manner that the fully-functional firearm is readily accessible.

[0005] Another approach to making a firearm safe is to secure a locking apparatus to, or about the firearm. Such an apparatus is generally configured to prevent an operation of a mechanism of the firearm. For example, various known trigger locks surround the trigger and/or trigger guard of the firearm to prevent access thereto, while additional trigger guards may interfere with the actuation of the trigger and/or the firing mechanism of the firearm. Similarly, barrel locks, cable locks, or other similar devices may obstruct the chamber of the firearm. This prevents the unauthorized or accidental discharge of the firearm by precluding the insertion of a cartridge (e.g., a live round). However, such systems must generally be unlocked and completely removed from the firearm prior to transitioning the firearm to a fully-functional state. As a result, the amount of time required to unlock the apparatus and transition the firearm to a fully-functional state may be unacceptable for a given deployment scenario. Therefore, a need exists for systems and methods that facilitate the securing of the firearm while allowing the fully-functional firearm to be employed within a requisite timeframe.

[0006] An additional approach to safing a firearm is to employ a user verification system to correlate an actuation of the firing mechanism to an authorized user prior to each shot of the firearm. Generally, these approaches operatively disengage the trigger from the firing mechanism of the firearm unless it is confirmed that the operation (e.g., the trigger squeeze) is being executed by an authorized user. The verification is typically accomplished via biometric, radio-frequency identification, or other similar electronic systems for each actuation (e.g., pull) of the trigger. In the event of the actuation of the trigger by an unauthorized user, the firearm typically remains in a default, non-operable state. However, the default to a non-operable state may also result in an authorized user being unable to employ the firearm following a malfunction of the verification system. As such, it may be desirable to employ systems and methods for securing the firearm that facilitate the reliable employment of the firearm when accessed by an authorized user.

[0007] Thus, a need exists for new and improved systems and methods for securing a firearm.

SUMMARY

[0008] This summary introduces certain aspects of the embodiments described herein to provide a basic understanding. This summary is not an extensive overview of the inventive subject matter, and it is not intended to identify key or critical elements or to delineate the scope of the inventive subject matter.

[0009] In some embodiments, the present disclosure is directed to a safety system for a handgun. The handgun has a slide movably coupled to the frame. The safety system includes an engagement member movably coupled to the handgun. The engagement member includes an actuator portion configured to receive a motive force. The engagement member also includes a contact face in contact with a portion of the slide so as to transfer a portion of the motive force to the slide in a proximal direction. The engagement member is configured to move relative to the frame between a lock position and an unlock position. The lock position corresponds to a separation distance between a distal end of a primer actuator of the handgun and a primer activation plane of the handgun. The unlock position corresponds to a nominal position of the distal end of the primer actuator. The engagement member is configured to transition between the lock position and the unlock position while remaining movably coupled to the handgun. The safety system also includes a lock mechanism operably coupled to the engagement member and positioned to restrict a movement of the engagement member from the lock position while the lock mechanism is in an engaged state. Additionally, the safety system includes a user interface operably coupled to the lock mechanism and configured to transition the lock mechanism between the engaged state and a disengaged state.

[0010] In some embodiments, the safety system also includes a motive assembly operably coupled to the actuator portion, the motive assembly is configured to generate the motive force in response to a user input. In some embodiments, the motive assembly includes an energy storage member, a motor electrically coupled to the energy storage member, and a lead screw rotatable by the motor. The lead screw converts a rotational input from the motor into a linear

motion of the engagement member. However, in some embodiments, the motive assembly includes a replaceable gas container containing a gas. In addition to generating the motive force, in some embodiments, the motive assembly is configured as the lock mechanism.

[0011] In some embodiments, the lock position further corresponds to a fully-retracted position of the slide, the transition to the lock position ejecting a cartridge from a chamber of a barrel of the handgun.

[0012] In some embodiments, the safety system also includes a housing supporting the user interface. The housing includes a coupling portion oriented to receive a mounting structure of the handgun. The housing also includes a lock cavity defined by an inner face of the housing, the lock cavity supporting at least a portion of the lock mechanism. Additionally, the housing includes an interface orifice oriented to facilitate the operable coupling of the engagement member to the lock mechanism. In some embodiments, the safety system also includes at least one fastener positioned adjacent the coupling portion and oriented to secure the mounting structure of the handgun within the coupling portion. The fastener(s) is at least partially occluded by the engagement member when in the lock position, thereby precluding a loosening of the at least one fastener.

[0013] In some embodiments, the lock mechanism is positioned within a cavity defined at least partially by the frame of the handgun. In such an embodiment, the engagement member is positioned at least partially between the slide and the frame and oriented to engage a bottom face of the slide. The engagement member is a toothed wheel positioned to engage a toothed portion of the slide.

[0014] In some embodiments, the user interface includes at least one of a fingerprint reader, a radio frequency identification reader, a numerical input apparatus, a microphone, a magnetic key, or a mechanical key. Additionally, in some embodiments, the engagement member defines an opening that is aligned with a distal end of a barrel of the handgun. The opening facilitates the departure of a projectile from the distal end of the barrel.

[0015] In an additional aspect, the present disclosure is directed to a method to make safe a handgun. The handgun has a slide movably coupled to a frame. The method includes applying a motive force in a proximal direction to an engagement member of a safety system. The engagement member is movably coupled to the handgun. The method also includes transferring at least a portion of the motive force to the slide via a contact face of the engagement member in contact with the slide to develop a proximal movement of the slide. Additionally, the method includes establishing a separation distance between a distal end of a primer actuator of the handgun and a primer activation plane of the handgun. The separation distance precludes contact between the primer actuator and a cartridge primer in response to an actuation of a firing mechanism of the handgun. The separation distance corresponds to a lock position of the engagement member. The method also includes, fixing the engagement member at the lock position via a lock mechanism of the safety system operably coupled to the engagement member. Further, the method includes maintaining the separation distance by precluding a distal movement of the slide via the engagement member positioned at the lock position.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] FIG. **1** is a side view of a firearm configured as a semi-automatic handgun.

[0017] FIG. **2** is an exploded perspective view of the firearm of FIG. **1**.

[0018] FIG. **3** is a diagrammatic illustration of a safety system for a handgun coupled to a portion of the handgun, with the safety system being depicted in an unlocked configuration.

[0019] FIG. **4** is a diagrammatic illustration of the safety system of FIG. **3**, with the safety system being depicted in a locked configuration wherein the slide of the handgun is displaced rearward (proximally) by a force exerted via an engagement member of the safety system.

[0020] FIG. **5** is a diagrammatic illustration of an embodiment of the safety system for a handgun coupled to a portion of a handgun, particularly illustrating the ejecting of a cartridge via the safety system during a transition to a locked configuration.

[0021] FIG. **6** is a diagrammatic illustration of the safety system of FIG. **5**, particularly illustrating the chambering of a cartridge during the unlocking of the safety system.

[0022] FIG. **7** is a diagrammatic illustration of an embodiment of the safety system positioned within the frame of the handgun, particularly illustrating the ejecting of a cartridge via the safety system during a transition to a locked configuration.

[0023] FIGS. **8** and **9** depict side views of an embodiment of a safety system coupled to the handgun of FIG. **1**, with the safety system being depicted in an unlocked configuration.

[0024] FIG. **10** depicts a front view of an embodiment of safety system of FIGS. **8** and **9** coupled to the handgun of FIG. **1**.

[0025] FIG. **11** depicts a perspective view of an embodiment of the safety system of FIGS. **8-10** coupled to the handgun of FIG. **1**, with the safety system being depicted in a locked configuration.

[0026] FIG. **12** depicts an exploded perspective view of the safety system of FIGS. **8-11**.

[0027] FIG. **13** is a perspective view of an embodiment of an engagement member of the safety system of FIGS. **8-12**.

[0028] FIG. **14** is a front view of an embodiment of an engagement member of the safety system.

[0029] FIG. **15** is a top view of the engagement member of the safety system shown in FIG. **14**.

[0030] FIG. **16** is a flow chart of a method to make safe a handgun, according to an embodiment.

[0031] FIG. **17** is a flow chart of a method of target engagement via a handgun, according to an embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0032] Generally, the present disclosure is directed to systems and methods for making safe a firearm, and in particular for safing a handgun. As used herein, the making safe of a firearm includes the transitioning of the firearm from a state of readiness, in which a chambered cartridge may be discharged, to a safe condition, in which the unauthorized or accidental discharge of the firearm is precluded, even with a cartridge remaining in the chamber. Accordingly, the systems and methods disclosed herein may be employed to establish and maintain a separation distance between the firing pin of the handgun and the primer of a cartridge.

[0033] In some embodiments, the separation distance established and maintained by the safety systems disclosed herein is greater than the maximal distal travel of the firing pin. Accordingly, the firing pin is unable to contact the primer of the cartridge even if the firing mechanism of the handgun is actuated. In other words, the separation distance established by the safety system prevents the distal tip of the firing pin from contacting the primer (or a plane on which the primer would lie if a cartridge were seated in the chamber) under all locked conditions.

[0034] To establish the separation distance, the safety systems described herein include an engagement member that engages with a portion of the slide of the handgun. The engagement member receives a force, such as from the operator and/or a motive assembly (e.g., a motor, a compressed gas cylinder, or other similar assembly). The force is directed in a proximal direction (e.g., toward the grip of the handgun). The engagement member transfers at least a portion of the force to the slide, causing the slide to move proximally (e.g., toward the rear). As the firing pin is contained by the slide, the proximal movement of the slide also shifts the firing pin proximally. Since the chamber of the barrel remains longitudinally stationary (though some barrels may exhibit a relatively minimal rotational motion (e.g., a drop barrel)), the proximal movement of the slide establishes the separation distance.

[0035] The proximal movement of the slide is resisted by a recoil spring. The recoil spring is configured to exert a force on the slide in the distal direction so that, unless prevented, the slide will return to a default slide-forward position. The default slide-forward position is considered the nominal position of the slide, wherein the handgun may be discharged by the actuation (e.g., pulling or squeezing) of the trigger. Therefore, in order to maintain the separation distance, the engagement member is secured in a locked position via a lock mechanism. When the engagement member is secured in the lock position, the engagement member prevents the distal movement of the slide. In other words, in the lock position, the engagement member maintains the slide in a position that is shifted proximally from the nominal position of the slide.

[0036] To place the handgun in an operational state (e.g., with the slide in the nominal position), the lock mechanism is disengaged via a user interface. The user interface is configured to receive an input from an authorized user and disengage the lock mechanism. The user interface may, for example, include a fingerprint reader, a radio frequency identification reader, a numerical input apparatus, a microphone, a magnetic key, a mechanical key, and/or other input system configured to authenticate an authorized user. Once unlocked, the safety system remains unlocked until the locking mechanism is affirmatively reengaged by the operator.

[0037] In some embodiments, the proximal movement of the slide in response to the force exerted by the engagement member is sufficient to eject a cartridge from the chamber of the handgun. For example, the engagement member in such an embodiment has a range of travel that is sufficient to drive the slide to a proximal travel limit (e.g., in contact with a slide stop). As the slide is driven to the rear, an ejector mechanism of the handgun is also actuated by the movement of the slide and any chambered cartridge is ejected. Additionally, in such an embodiment, the disengagement of the locking mechanism will allow the engagement member and the slide to move rapidly in the distal direction. As the slide moves distally (as motivated by the recoil spring), a cartridge may be stripped from a loaded magazine and seated in the chamber via a nominal chambering operation of the handgun. As such, the safety system may be employed to clear the chamber of loaded firearm, maintain an open breach with the slide held to the rear, and facilitate the chambering of a cartridge. In other words, the unlocking of the safety system may cause a transition of the handgun to a chambered, operational state from which the handgun may be discharged.

[0038] As used herein, the term "about" when used in connection with a referenced numeric indication means the referenced numeric indication plus or minus up to 10 percent of that referenced numeric indication. For example, the language "about 50" covers the range of 45 to 55. Similarly, the language "about 5" covers the range of 4.5 to 5.5.

[0039] As used in this specification and the appended claims, the word "distal" refers to direction towards a target and away from a midline of an operator holding the handgun by the handle, such as in a firing orientation. Similarly, the word "proximal" refers to a direction away from the target and toward the midline of the operator. Thus, for example, the end of the barrel (e.g., the muzzle) from which a bullet departs under a nominal operation is closest to the target and would be the distal end of the handgun, and the end opposite the distal end (e.g., the portion of the handgun held by the operator when firing the handgun) would be the proximal end.

[0040] Further, specific words chosen to describe one or more embodiments and optional elements or features are not intended to limit the invention. For example, spatially relative terms—such as "beneath", "below", "lower", "above", "upper", "proximal", "distal", and the like—may be used to describe the relationship of one element or feature to another element or feature as illustrated in the figures. These spatially relative terms are intended to encompass different positions (i.e., translational placements) and orientations (i.e., rotational placements) of a device in use or operation in addition to the position and orientation shown in the figures. For example, if a device in the figures is turned over, elements described as "below" or "beneath" other elements or features would then be "above" or "over" the other elements or features. Thus, the term "below" can encompass both positions and orientations of above and below. A device may be otherwise oriented (e.g., rotated 90 degrees or at other orientations) and the spatially relative descriptors used herein interpreted accordingly. Likewise, descriptions of movement along (translation) and around (rotation) various axes includes various spatial device positions and orientations.

[0041] Similarly, geometric terms, such as "parallel", "perpendicular", "round", or "square", are not intended to require absolute mathematical precision, unless the context indicates otherwise. Instead, such geometric terms allow for variations due to manufacturing or equivalent functions. For example, if an element is described as "round" or "generally round," a component that is not precisely circular (e.g., one that is slightly oblong or is a many-sided polygon) is still encompassed by this description.

[0042] In addition, the singular forms "a", "an", and "the" are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context indicates otherwise. The terms "comprises", "includes", "has", and the like specify the presence of stated

features, steps, operations, elements, components, etc. but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, steps, operations, elements, components, or groups.

[0043] FIGS. **1** and **2** are a side view and an exploded perspective view of a firearm configured as a semi-automatic handgun **100**. The handgun **100** includes a frame **110**. The frame **110** is a unitary body that includes a grip portion **112**. The grip portion **112** is oriented and shaped to be received by a hand of an operator of the handgun **100**. The grip portion **112** defines a cavity for receiving a magazine **108**. The magazine **108** may contain ammunition for the handgun **100**. The frame **110** also includes a trigger guard **114** positioned distally (e.g., forward) of the grip portion **112**. The trigger guard **114** at least partially surrounds the trigger **142** and partially restricts access thereto.

[0044] The frame **110** may also include a mounting structure **116** positioned distally relative to the trigger guard **114**. In some embodiments, such as depicted in FIGS. **1** and **2**, the mounting structure **116** is milled or otherwise formed into a lower surface of the frame **110**. The mounting structure **116** may, for example, be a Picatinny rail, an accessory rail and/or other similar structure. The mounting structure **116** provides a mounting platform for firearm accessories, such as the safety system described herein, a tactical light, a laser aiming module, a camera, or other suitable accessory.

[0045] The handgun **100** also includes a slide **102** that is movably coupled (e.g., slidingly coupled) to the frame **110**. The slide **102** is the top portion of the handgun **100** and has a long axis that extends generally horizontally when the handgun **100** is oriented a nominal employment orientation. During operation of the handgun **100**, the slide **102** is configured to translate first in a proximal direction (P) and then in a distal direction (D) relative to the frame **110** following the discharge of the handgun **100**.

[0046] As illustrated in FIG. **2**, the handgun **100** includes a recoil spring **104**. The recoil spring **104** is axially aligned with and circumscribes a recoil spring guide **106**. The recoil spring **104** is positioned so that a proximal movement of the slide **102** relative to the frame compresses the recoil spring **104**. The recoil spring **104** is thus oriented to exert a force on the slide **102** in a distal direction. For example, under nominal operations (e.g., an authorized, intentional actuation of the trigger **142**), the discharge of the handgun **100** results in the proximal movement of the slide **102** relative to the frame **110** and, thus, the compression of the recoil spring **104**. When the slide **102** encounters a proximal travel limit (e.g., a slide stop), the potential energy of the recoil spring **104** is released, thereby returning the slide **102** distally to a nominal position (e.g., a slide-forward position such as depicted in FIG. **1**).

[0047] The handgun **100** also includes a barrel **120** supported by the slide **102**. The barrel **120** is a tubular metallic structure through which a projectile **132** (e.g., a bullet) or shot charge is fired. The barrel **120** is a unitary body that extends between a muzzle **122** and a chamber end **124** (e.g., a proximal end of the barrel **120**). The muzzle **122** corresponds to the distal end of the barrel from which the projectile **132** exits following discharge. The muzzle **122** is the distal end of a generally linear portion **121** of the barrel **120**. The linear portion **121** of the barrel **120** has a generally uniform outer diameter and defines a hollow internal lumen (e.g., a bore) of the barrel **120**. In some embodiments, the linear portion **121** extends distally from a barrel block **126**. The barrel block **126** is an enlarged portion of the barrel **120** that may be configured to interface with the slide **102**. The barrel block **126** also defines a chamber **128**. The chamber **128** is a hollow internal lumen of the barrel **120** that is axially aligned with the bore and holds a cartridge **130** ready for firing/discharge.

[0048] In some embodiments, the handgun **100** is configured to discharge a cartridge **130** in order to engage a target. The cartridge **130** includes a projectile **132** at least partially contained within the casing **134**. The casing **134** may contain a quantity of a propellant in fluid communication with a primer **136**. The projectile **132** has an outer diameter that is less than the bore, while the casing **134** has an outer diameter that is less than the inner diameter of the chamber but is greater than the bore. In other words, the casing **134** is configured to be seated at least partially within the chamber **128**, with at least a portion of the projectile **132** extending distally into the bore. In embodiments, a transition of the barrel **120** from the chamber **128** to the bore may define a maximal insertion distance of the casing **134** within the barrel **120**, therefore defining a position of the primer **136** relative to the frame **110** adjacent the chamber end **124**.

[0049] In some embodiments, the handgun **100** may be discharged via a firing mechanism **140**. The firing mechanism includes a trigger **142** operably coupled to a primer actuator **144** (e.g., a firing pin) via a linkage mechanism. The primer actuator **144** may, for example, be a rigid rod or other suitable structure. The primer actuator **144** includes a distal end **146** configured to impart a force to the primer **136** of a chambered cartridge **130** in response to an actuation of the trigger **142** to discharge the handgun **100**.

[0050] The distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** has a nominal range of travel (TPA). In some embodiments nominal range of travel (TPA) is defined between a maximal proximal position of the distal end **146** when the handgun **100** is prepared to fire (e.g., cocked) and a point of maximal travel in the distal direction attained by the distal end **146** in response to a force imparted to the primer actuator **144**. For example, in some embodiments, the handgun **100** is a striker-fired handgun with the primer actuator **144** being a striker assembly. In such an embodiment, the initial actuation of the trigger **142** exerts a force on the firing pin in the proximal direction to transition the distal end **146** from a nominal position (P_N) (FIG. **3**) along the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}). This force also applies a tension to a spring of the striker assembly and fully cocks the handgun **100**. As the actuation of the trigger **142** continues, the trigger **142** is operably decoupled from the striker assembly and the spring imparts a force on the firing pin in the distal direction, resulting in the positioning of the distal end **146** at the point of maximal distal travel. In an additional embodiment, the handgun **100** is a hammer-fired handgun **100** wherein cocking the handgun **100** places an external hammer under a tensile load. In such an embodiment, the distal end **146** is positioned at a nominal position (P_N) (FIG. **3**) along the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}) when the handgun **100** is both cocked and uncocked. Upon actuation of the trigger, the hammer is released, and a force is imparted on the firing pin in the distal direction, resulting in the positioning of the distal end **146** at the point of maximal distal travel. It should be appreciated that the point of maximum travel in a distal direction extends distally beyond a point of contact (e.g., a primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) (FIG. **3**)) with the primer **136**.

[0051] FIGS. **3** and **4** are diagrammatic illustrations of a safety system **1000** for a handgun coupled to a portion of the handgun **100**. The safety system **1000** develops a forced malfunction of the handgun **100** that precludes the handgun **100** from discharging when the safety system **1000** is in a locked configuration. In some embodiments, the safety system **1000** is coupled to an existing handgun **100** as depicted in FIGS. **3** and **4**. However, in additional embodiments, the safety system **1000** may be integrated into a newly manufactured handgun **100**. Although shown and described as being coupled to the handgun **100**, the safety system **1000** can be coupled to and/or used with any suitable firearm.

[0052] In FIG. **3**, the safety system **1000** is depicted in an unlocked configuration, while in FIG. **4**, the safety system **1000** is depicted in a locked configuration. The safety system **1000** includes an engagement member **1100**, a lock mechanism **1200**, and a user interface **1300**. As described in more detail below, the safety system **1000** can allow the handgun **100** to be selectively locked (or placed in a safe, "no-fire" condition) and unlocked while remaining coupled to the handgun **100**. The engagement member **1100** is arranged orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of the handgun **100** and is movably coupled to the handgun **100**. The engagement member **1100** includes an actuator portion **1102** and a contact face **1104**. In other words, the engagement member **1100** may, in various embodiments, be configured to move/translate (e.g., slide, rotate, pivot, and/or tilt) relative to the frame **110** in accordance with the locked/unlocked configuration of the safety system **1000**. The movement/translation of the engagement member **1100** is the result of a motive force (F_M) received by the actuator portion **1102** of the engagement member **1100**. For example, in some embodiments the actuator portion **1102** can include a surface or portion that allows a user to manually grasp or manipulate the engagement member **1100** to move the engagement member **1100** relative to the frame **110**. In other embodiments, the actuator portion **1102** is operably coupled to receive the motive force (F_M) from a motive assembly (not shown). It should be appreciated that the motive force (F_M) has a magnitude that is greater than that of a force exerted on the slide **102** by the recoil spring **104**.

[0053] As depicted in FIGS. **3** and **4**, the engagement member **1100** includes the contact face **1104** that is configured to contact a portion of the slide **102**. Thus, in certain operational conditions, movement of the engagement member **1100** can produce movement of the slide **102**. In other operational conditions, the contact between contact face **1104** and the slide **102** can limit movement of the slide **102**. In some embodiments, the contact face **1104** is in contact with a portion of the slide **102** when the safety system **1000** is both in the locked configuration and in the unlocked configuration. In other embodiments, a clearance may be established between the contact face **1104** and the portion of the slide **102** when the safety system **1000** is in the unlocked configuration, such as depicted in FIG. **3**. Similarly stated, the contact face **1104** can be spaced apart from the slide **102** when the safety system **1000** is in the unlocked configuration. In some embodiments, the contact between the contact face **1104** and the portions slide **102** facilitates the transfer of a portion of the motive force (F_M) to the slide **102** in a proximal direction (P).

[0054] The engagement member **1100** is configured to move relative to the frame **110** between a lock position (L_P) (as depicted in FIG. **4**) and an unlock position (U_P) (as depicted in FIG. **3**). In some embodiments, the engagement member **1100** is configured to transition between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position (U_P) while remaining movably coupled to the handgun **100**. In other words, in some embodiments, the engagement member **1100** (and the safety system **1000**) remains coupled to the handgun **100** when transitioned between the lock and unlock positions. For example, in some embodiments the engagement member **1100**, is configured to move linearly between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position (U_P). The lock position (L_P) corresponds to a separation distance (SD) between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** of the handgun **100** and a primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) of the handgun **100**. In other words, the movement of the slide **102** (and the resultant longitudinal movement of the supported primer actuator **144**) in response to the portion of the motive force (F_M) transferred by the engagement member **1100** transitioning to the lock position (L_P) establishes the separation distance (SD). Said another way, the proximal movement of the slide **102** results in a proximal shift of the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}) of the primer actuator **144** relative to the frame **110**, and thus the barrel **120**.

[0055] The separation distance (SD) has a magnitude that precludes contact between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** (e.g., the firing pin) and the primer **136** of a chambered cartridge **130** even if the firing mechanism **140** is actuated. Said another way, the magnitude of the separation distance (SD) is such that the point of maximal distal travel (e.g., the distal limit of the nominal range of travel (T_{PA})) is proximal to, and separated from, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}). Insofar as the separation distance (SD) precludes any contact between the primer actuator **144** and the primer **136**, the handgun **100** is rendered inoperable (e.g., made safe) so long as the separation distance (SD) is maintained.

[0056] The primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) is a plane orthogonal to the longitudinal axis (L) of the handgun **100**. The primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) corresponds to the nominal longitudinal position at which a proximal face of the primer **136** would lie if/when a cartridge **130** were/is seated in the chamber **128**. In other words, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) corresponds to the longitudinal position at which the distal end **146** would first contact the primer **136** during the discharging of the handgun **100**. In some embodiments, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) may be congruent with a plane defined by a maximal proximal portion of the chamber end **124** of the barrel **120**.

[0057] As depicted in FIG. **3**, the unlock position (U_P) corresponds to a nominal position (P_N) of the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** along the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}). The nominal position (P_N) may be proximal to the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) such that a nominal clearance exists between the distal end **146** and the primer **136**. In some embodiments, the nominal position (P_N) corresponds to the longitudinal position of the distal end **146** when the handgun **100** is in an uncocked state with the slide **102** in the default, slide-forward position, such as depicted in FIGS. **1** and **3**. However, in additional embodiments, the nominal position (P_N) corresponds to the nominal longitudinal position of the distal end **146** when the handgun **100** is in a half-cocked state or a cocked (e.g., fully cocked) state with the slide **102** in the default, slide-forward position. In other words, when the engagement member **1100** is in the

unlock position (U_P), the handgun **100** may be in an operational state/condition from which the handgun **100** may be discharged to engage a target.

[0058] In some embodiments, the safety system **1000** includes the lock mechanism **1200**, which is operably coupled to the engagement member **1100**. The lock mechanism **1200** is positioned to restrict the movement of the engagement member **1100** from the locked position (L_P) while the lock mechanism is engaged. In other words, the lock mechanism **1200** maintains the engagement member **1100** (and therefore the engaged slide **102**) in a fixed position (e.g., the position (L_P)) relative to the frame **110**. In some embodiments, the lock mechanism **1200** may be a mechanical lock mechanism wherein the lock mechanism **1200** mechanically engages a portion of the engagement member **1100**, such as via at least one pin, a catch, a locking bar, a cam, and/or other suitable structure. In some embodiments, the lock mechanism **1200** may utilize a magnetic force to restrict the movement of the engagement member **1100**. For example, the lock mechanism **1200** may be configured to magnetically engage the engagement member **1100** directly or may utilize a magnetic field to restrict the rotation of a component (e.g., a lead screw) of the safety system **1000** to which the engagement member **1100** is rotationally coupled.

[0059] As further depicted in FIGS. **3** and **4**, the safety system **1000** includes the user interface **1300**, which is operably coupled to the lock mechanism **1200**. The user interface **1300** is configured to transition the lock mechanism **1200** between an engaged state and a disengaged state. In other words, the user interface **1300** is employed by an authorized user to facilitate the movement of the engagement member **1100** between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position (U_P) by locking or unlocking the lock mechanism **1200**. Once unlocked, the safety system **1000** remains unlocked until the locking mechanism **1200** is affirmatively reengaged by an operator.

[0060] The user interface **1300** may include a biometric user identification (e.g., fingerprint identification) unit, a radio frequency identification reader, a numerical input apparatus, a microphone, a magnetic key, a mechanical key, and/or other input system configured to authenticate an authorized user. For example, the user interface **1300** may, in some embodiments, include a fingerprint sensor operably coupled to a biometric processor and a data storage device containing stored identification data for authorized users. The fingerprint sensor may be an optical sensor, a thermal sensor, and/or a pressure sensor and may be configured as a static sensor or a swipe sensor. Additionally, in some embodiments the user interface **1300** includes a wireless communication unit that facilitates the remote operation of the safety system **1000** via a wireless network, a cellular network, and/or a Bluetooth connection.

[0061] In some embodiments, a GPS module **1302** is operably coupled to the user interface **1300**. The GPS module **1302** facilitates position tracking of the handgun **100** via the safety system **1000** coupled thereto. For example, the GPS module **1302** may the employed in conjunction with a geo-fence (e.g., a region with boundaries that are defined by GPS coordinates). In some embodiments an embodiment, an authorized user of the handgun **100** may be alerted in the event the handgun **100** departs the geo-fence. In additional embodiments, the user interface **1300** may be disabled upon the departure of the handgun **100** from the geo-fence. In further embodiments, the user interface **1300** may be configured to transition the lock mechanism **1200** to, or maintain the lock mechanism **1200** in, the engaged state following the departure of the handgun **100** from the geo-fence.

[0062] In some embodiments, the safety system **1000** includes a housing **1500**. The housing **1500** provides the structure for support and mounting of the safety system **1000** to the handgun **100**. The housing **1500** is formed from materials having sufficient strength to prevent access to internal components of the safety system **1000**. For example, in various embodiments, the housing **1500** is formed from a metal, a reinforced plastic, and/or composite. In some embodiments, the housing **1500** is the unitary structure defining at least one internal cavity. In other embodiments, the housing **1500** is formed by the coupling of multiple housing members that are separately formed. For example, the housing **1500** may be formed at least from a first housing half and a second housing half.

[0063] As depicted in FIGS. **3** and **4**, the housing **1500** supports the user interface **1300**. For example, the housing **1500** may define an external recess in which the user interface **1300** may be secured. The housing **1500** includes a coupling portion **1510**. The coupling portion **1510** is configured to receive a portion of the handgun **100**, such as the mounting structure **116**. In other words, the housing **1500**, and thus the safety system **1000**, may be fixedly coupled to the handgun **100** via an interface between the coupling portion **1510** and the mounting structure **116**. The housing **1500** may, for example, be coupled to the handgun **100** and a position that is forward of the trigger guard **114**. As depicted in FIGS. **3** and **4** the positioning of safety system **1000**, in some embodiments, establishes a spacing between the housing **1500** and the trigger guard **114**. However, in some embodiments, the housing **1500** is formed to conform with a portion of the trigger guard **114** and is positioned in contact therewith.

[0064] In some embodiments, the housing **1500** also defines a lock cavity **1520** supporting at least a portion of the lock mechanism **1200**. The lock cavity **1520** may, for example, be defined by an inner face of the housing **1500**. Additionally, the housing **1500** defines an interface orifice **1530**. The interface orifice **1530** is oriented to facilitate the operable coupling of the engagement member **1100** to the lock mechanism **1200**. The interface orifice **1530** may, for example, correspond to a slot or hole through which a portion of the engagement member **1100** may be inserted. The interface orifice **1530** is sized to facilitate a desired degree of travel of the engagement member **1100**.

[0065] Although the safety system **1000** is described above as allowing a user to manually grasp or manipulate the engagement member **1100** to move the engagement member **1100** relative to the frame **110**, in other embodiments, any of the safety systems described herein can include a motive assembly that produces a motive force (F_M) to move the engagement member. For example, FIGS. **5** and **6** are diagrammatic illustrations of a safety system **2000** for a handgun coupled to a portion of the handgun **100**. As described for previous embodiments, in some embodiments the safety system **2000** develops a forced malfunction of the handgun **100** that precludes the handgun **100** from discharging when the safety system **2000** is in a locked configuration. In some embodiments, the safety system **2000** is coupled to an existing handgun **100** as depicted in FIGS. **5** and **6**. Although shown and described as being coupled to the

handgun **100**, the safety system **2000** can be coupled to and/or used with any suitable firearm.

[0066] In FIG. **5**, the safety system **2000** is depicted in a locked configuration, while in FIG. **6**, the safety system **2000** is depicted in an unlocked configuration. The safety system **2000** includes a housing **2500**, an engagement member **2100**, a lock mechanism **2200**, a user interface **2300**, and a motive assembly **2400**. As described in more detail below, the safety system **2000** can allow the handgun **100** to be selectively locked (or placed in a safe, "no-fire" condition) and unlocked while remaining coupled to the handgun **100**. The engagement member **2100** is movably coupled to the handgun **100** and includes an actuator portion **2102** and a contact face **2104**. In other words, the engagement member **2100** may, in various embodiments, be configured to move/translate (e.g., slide, rotate, pivot, and/or tilt) relative to the frame **110** in accordance with the locked/unlocked configuration of the safety system **2000**. The movement/translation of the engagement member **2100** is the result of a motive force (F_M) received by the actuator portion **2102** of the engagement member **2100**. For example, in some embodiments the actuator portion **2102** is operably coupled to receive the motive force F_M from a motive assembly **2400**.

[0067] As depicted in FIGS. **5** and **6**, the engagement member **2100** includes the contact face **2104** that is configured to contact a portion of the slide **102**. Thus, in certain operational conditions, movement of the engagement member **2100** can produce movement of the slide **102**. In other operational conditions, the contact between contact face **2104** and the slide **102** can limit movement of the slide **102**. In some embodiments, a clearance may be established between the contact face **2104** and the portion of the slide **102** when the safety system **2000** is in the unlocked configuration. Similarly stated, the contact face **2104** can be spaced apart from the slide **102** when the safety system **2000** is in the unlocked configuration. In some embodiments, the contact between the contact face **2104** and the portions slide **102** facilitates the transfer of a portion of the motive force (F_M) to the slide **102** in a proximal direction (P).

[0068] As described for previous embodiments, in some embodiments the engagement member **2100** is configured to move relative to the frame **110** between a lock position (L_P) (as depicted in FIG. **6**) and an unlock position (U_P) (as depicted in FIG. **5**). In some embodiments, the engagement member **2100** is configured to transition between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position (U_P) while remaining movably coupled to the handgun **100**. In other words, in some embodiments, the engagement member **2100** (and the safety system **2000**) remains coupled to the handgun **100** when transitioned between the lock and unlock positions. For example, in some embodiments the engagement member **2100**, is configured to move linearly between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position (U_P). The lock position (L_P) corresponds to a separation distance (SD) between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** of the handgun **100** and a primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) of the handgun **100**. In other words, the movement of the slide **102** (and the resultant longitudinal movement of the supported primer actuator **144**) in response to the portion of the motive force (F_M) transferred by the engagement member **2100** transitioning to the lock position (L_P) establishes the separation distance (SD). Said another way, the proximal movement of the slide **102** results in a proximal shift of the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}) of the primer actuator **144** relative to the frame **110**, and thus the barrel **120**.

[0069] The separation distance (SD) has a magnitude that precludes contact between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** (e.g., the firing pin) and the primer **136** of a chambered cartridge **130** even if the firing mechanism **140** is actuated. Said another way, the magnitude of the separation distance (SD) is such that the point of maximal distal travel (e.g., the distal limit of the nominal range of travel (T_{PA})) is proximal to, and separated from, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}). Insofar as the separation distance (SD) precludes any contact between the primer actuator **144** and the primer **136**, the handgun **100** is rendered inoperable (e.g., made safe) so long as the separation distance (SD) is maintained.

[0070] The primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) is a plane orthogonal to the longitudinal axis (L) of the handgun **100**. The primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) corresponds to the nominal longitudinal position at which a proximal face of the primer **136** would lie if/when a cartridge **130** were/is seated in the chamber **128**. In other words, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) corresponds to the longitudinal position at which the distal end **146** would first contact the primer **136** during the discharging of the handgun **100**. In some embodiments, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) may be congruent with a plane defined by a maximal proximal portion of the chamber end **124** of the barrel **120**.

[0071] In some embodiments, the lock position (L_P) corresponds to a fully-retracted position of the slide **102**. In other words, when the engagement member **2100** is in the lock position (L_P), the slide **102** is at a point of maximal proximal travel (e.g., in contact with a proximal stop). Said another way, in some embodiments, when the engagement member **2100** is in the lock position (L_P), the slide **102** is to the rear. The lock position (L_P) corresponding to the fully-retracted position of the slide **102** also corresponds to a maximal separation distance (SD) between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** of the handgun **100** and the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) of the handgun **100**.

[0072] As depicted in FIG. **5**, in some embodiments, the movement of the slide **102** in the proximal direction in response to the motive force (F_M) applied via the engagement member **2100** ejects (as shown by the arrow E) a cartridge **130** from the chamber **128** of the barrel **120**. In other words, when the safety system **2000** is actuated to make safe the handgun **100**, the transition of the engagement member **2100** to the lock position (L_P) (e.g., the proximal movement of the engagement member **2100**) facilitates the ejecting (E) of a chambered cartridge **130**. The cartridge **130** is the ejected (E) via an ejector mechanism (not shown) of the handgun **100**. It should be appreciated that ejecting (E) the cartridge **130** during the making safe of the handgun **100** may facilitate the storage of the handgun **100** with an empty chamber **128**.

[0073] The unlock position (U_P) corresponds to a nominal position of the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** along the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}). The nominal position may be proximal to the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) such that a nominal clearance exists between the distal end **146** and the primer **136**. In some embodiments, the nominal position corresponds to the longitudinal position of the distal end **146** when the handgun **100** is in an uncocked state with the slide **102** in the default, slide-forward position. However, in additional embodiments, the nominal position

corresponds to the nominal longitudinal position of the distal end **146** when the handgun **100** is in a half-cocked state or a cocked (e.g., fully cocked) state with the slide **102** in the default, slide-forward position. In other words, when the engagement member **2100** is in the unlock position (U_P), the handgun **100** may be in an operational state/condition from which the handgun **100** may be discharged to engage a target.

[0074] As depicted in FIG. **6**, in some embodiments transitioning the engagement member **2100** from the lock position (L_P) to the unlock position (U_P) facilitates a distal movement (see the arrow DM) of the slide **102**. In other words, the transition (e.g., the linear movement) of the engagement member **2100** to the unlock position (U_P) may remove a restriction on the longitudinal movement (e.g., movement in the distal direction relative to the frame **110**) of the slide **102**, thereby allowing the slide **102** to return to the nominal, default slide-forward position (as depicted in FIG. **1**) in response to the force applied via the recoil spring **104**.

[0075] In some embodiments, the distal movement (DM) of the slide **102** seats (shown by the arrow S) a cartridge **130** in the chamber **128** of the handgun **100**. For example, unlocking of the safety system **2000** permits the transition of the engagement member **2100** from the lock position (L_P) to the unlock position (U_P). This transition allows the slide **102** to move distally. In accordance with the nominal operation of the handgun **100**, the distal movement of the slide **102** strips a cartridge **130'** from a loaded magazine (not shown) inserted in the handgun **100** and seats(S) the cartridge **130** in the chamber **128**. In other words, in some embodiments, the unlocking of the safety system **2000** results in the chambering of a cartridge **130** (e.g., seating(S) a cartridge **130** in the chamber **128**) and the placing of the handgun **100** in an operational state, from which the handgun **100** may be discharged/employed.

[0076] In some embodiments, the safety system **2000** includes the lock mechanism **2200**, which is operably coupled to the engagement member **2100**. The lock mechanism **2200** is positioned to restrict the movement of the engagement member **2100** from the locked position (L_P) while the lock mechanism is engaged. In other words, the lock mechanism **2200** maintains the engagement member **2100** (and therefore the engaged slide **102**) in a fixed position (e.g., the position (L_P)) relative to the frame **110**. In some embodiments, the lock mechanism **2200** may be a mechanical lock mechanism wherein the lock mechanism **2200** mechanically engages a portion of the engagement member **2100**, such as via at least one pin, a catch, a locking bar, a cam, and/or other suitable structure. In some embodiments, the lock mechanism **2200** may utilize a magnetic force to restrict the movement of the engagement member **2100**. For example, the lock mechanism **2200** may be configured to magnetically engage the engagement member **2100** directly or may utilize a magnetic field to restrict the rotation of a component (e.g., a lead screw) of the safety system **2000** to which the engagement member **2100** is rotationally coupled.

[0077] As further depicted in FIGS. **5** and **6**, the safety system **2000** includes the user interface **2300**, which is operably coupled to the lock mechanism **2200**. The user interface **2300** is configured to transition the lock mechanism **2200** between an engaged state and a disengaged state. In other words, the user interface **2300** is employed by an authorized user to facilitate the movement of the engagement member **2100** between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position (U_P) by locking or unlocking the lock mechanism **2200**. Once unlocked, the safety system **2000** remains unlocked until the locking mechanism **2200** is affirmatively reengaged by an operator.

[0078] The user interface **2300** may include a biometric user identification (e.g., fingerprint identification) unit, a radio frequency identification reader, a numerical input apparatus, a microphone, a magnetic key, a mechanical key, and/or other input system configured to authenticate an authorized user. For example, the user interface **2300** may, in some embodiments, include a fingerprint sensor operably coupled to a biometric processor and a data storage device containing stored identification data for authorized users. The fingerprint sensor may be an optical sensor, a thermal sensor, and/or a pressure sensor and may be configured as a static sensor or a swipe sensor. Additionally, in some embodiments the user interface **2300** includes a wireless communication unit that facilitates the remote operation of the safety system **2000** via a wireless network, a cellular network, and/or a Bluetooth connection.

[0079] In some embodiments, a GPS module **2302** is operably coupled to the user interface **2300**. The GPS module **2302** facilitates position tracking of the handgun **100** via the safety system **2000** coupled thereto. For example, the GPS module **2302** may the employed in conjunction with a geo-fence (e.g., a region with boundaries that are defined by GPS coordinates). In some embodiments an embodiment, an authorized user of the handgun **100** may be alerted in the event the handgun **100** departs the geo-fence. In additional embodiments, the user interface **2300** may be disabled upon the departure of the handgun **100** from the geo-fence. In further embodiments, the user interface **2300** may be configured to transition the lock mechanism **2200** to, or maintain the lock mechanism **2200** in, the engaged state following the departure of the handgun **100** from the geo-fence.

[0080] As depicted in FIGS. **5** and **6**, the safety system **2000** includes a motive assembly **2400**. The motive assembly **2400** is operably coupled to the actuator portion **2102** of the engagement member **2100**. The motive assembly **2400** is configured to generate the motive force (F_M). In some embodiments, the motive force (F_M) is generated in response to a user input, such as may be received via the user interface **2300**. The motive assembly **2400** may include a motor assembly, a pneumatic assembly, and/or a spring assembly configured to generate the motive force (F_M). For example, in some embodiments the motor assembly may include a lead screw (e.g., similar to the lead screw **4440** shown in FIG. **12**) that is rotatable by an electric motor (e.g., similar to the motor **4420** shown in FIG. **12**). Additionally, in some embodiments, the pneumatic assembly may include a replaceable gas canister (not shown) containing a gas. In other words, the motive assembly **2400** includes a mechanism that transforms thermal, chemical, electrical, pressure, or any other source of energy into the mechanical energy represented by the motive force (F_M).

[0081] In some embodiments, the safety system **2000**, via the motive assembly **2400**, may facilitate the single-handed chambering of a cartridge **130** and/or clearing of a malfunction of the handgun **100** via the cycling of the handgun **100**. More specifically, the handgun **100** may be maintained in a deployed orientation (e.g., with the muzzle **122** pointed downrange) in the hand of an authorized user while the

authorized user actuates the unlocked safety system **2000**. The authorized user may actuate the safety system **2000** via an engagement of the user interface **2300** with a portion (e.g., a finger) of the same hand holding the handgun **100**. Upon actuation, the motive assembly **2400** may drive the engagement member **2100**, and thus the slide **102**, proximally (e.g., rearward). The proximal motion of the engagement member **2100** and the slide **102** may continue until the slide **102** encounters a slide stop. The proximal motion of the slide **102** may eject any chambered, misfed, or jammed cartridge **130**. Once the slide **102** has moved proximally a maximal distance, the authorized user may unlock the safety system **2000** via an engagement of the user interface **2300** with the portion of the same hand holding the handgun **100**. The user interface **2300** may be engaged by the portion of the hand of the authorized user while continuing to maintain the handgun **100** in the deployed orientation. With the safety system **2000** unlocked, the slide **102** is moved distally into the nominal, default slide-forward position by the recoil spring **104**. The distal movement of the slide **102** seats (shown by the arrow S) a cartridge **130** in the chamber **128** of the handgun **100**. As such, the handgun **100** may be cycled utilizing only one hand of the authorized user to place the handgun **100** in an operational configuration.

[0082] In some embodiments, the motive assembly **2400** may also be configured to serve as the lock mechanism **2200**. In other words, the motive assembly **2400** may be configured to both generate the motive force (F_M) and to restrict the movement of the engagement member **2100** from the lock position (L_P). For example, in some embodiments, the motive assembly **2400** may include a stepper motor (not shown) and a lead screw (not shown) to which the engagement member **2100** is coupled. The stepper motor may be employed to hold the engagement member **2100** in the lock position (L_P) by maintaining the lead screw in a fixed rotational position.

[0083] In some embodiments, the safety system **2000** includes a housing **2500**. The housing **2500** provides the structure for support and mounting of the safety system **2000** to the handgun **100**. The housing **2500** is formed from materials having sufficient strength to prevent access to internal components of the safety system **2000**. For example, in various embodiments, the housing **2500** is formed from a metal, a reinforced plastic, and/or composite. In some embodiments, the housing **2500** is the unitary structure defining at least one internal cavity. In other embodiments, the housing **2500** is formed by the coupling of multiple housing members that are separately formed. For example, the housing **2500** may be formed at least from a first housing half and a second housing half.

[0084] As depicted in FIGS. **5** and **6**, the housing **2500** supports the user interface **2300**. For example, the housing **2500** may define an external recess in which the user interface **2300** may be secured. The housing **2500** includes a coupling portion **2510**. The coupling portion **2510** is configured to receive a portion of the handgun **100**, such as the mounting structure **116**. In other words, the housing **2500**, and thus the safety system **2000**, may be fixedly coupled to the handgun **100** via an interface between the coupling portion **2510** and the mounting structure **116**. The housing **2500** may, for example, be coupled to the handgun **100** and a position that is forward of the trigger guard **114**. As depicted in FIGS. **3** and **4** the positioning of safety system **2000**, in some embodiments, establishes a spacing between the housing **2500** and the trigger guard **114**. However, in some embodiments, the housing **2500** is formed to conform with a portion of the trigger guard **114** and is positioned in contact therewith.

[0085] In some embodiments, the housing **2500** also defines a lock cavity **2520** supporting at least a portion of the lock mechanism **2200**. The lock cavity **2520** may, for example, be defined by an inner face of the housing **2500**. Additionally, the housing **2500** defines an interface orifice (not shown). The interface orifice is oriented to facilitate the operable coupling of the engagement member **2100** to the lock mechanism **2200**. The interface orifice may, for example, correspond to a slot or hole through which a portion of the engagement member **2100** may be inserted. The interface orifice is sized to facilitate a desired degree of travel of the engagement member **2100**.

[0086] Although the safety system **1000** and the safety system **2000** are shown as including a separate housing that contains the components of the safety system and is mounted to the handgun **100**, in other embodiments, any of the safety system components described herein can be integrated within a handgun. For example, FIG. **7** is a diagrammatic illustration of a safety system **3000** for a handgun **100**. As described for previous embodiments, in some embodiments the safety system **3000** develops a forced malfunction of the handgun **100** that precludes the handgun **100** from discharging when the safety system **3000** is in a locked configuration. In some embodiments, the safety system **3000** is integrated into a newly manufactured handgun **100**. Although shown and described as being integrated with the handgun **100**, the safety system **3000** can be coupled to and/or used with any suitable firearm.

[0087] In FIG. **7**, the safety system **3000** is depicted in a locked configuration. The safety system **3000** includes an engagement member **3100**, a lock mechanism **3200**, a user interface **3300**, and, optionally, a motive assembly **3400**. As described in more detail below, the safety system **3000** can allow the handgun **100** to be selectively locked (or placed in a safe, "no-fire" condition) and unlocked while remaining integrated with the handgun **100**. The engagement member **3100** is movably coupled to the handgun **100** and includes an actuator portion **3102** and a contact face **3104**. In other words, the engagement member **3100** may, in various embodiments, be configured to move/translate (e.g., rotate) relative to the frame **110** in accordance with the locked/unlocked configuration of the safety system **3000**. The movement/translation of the engagement member **3100** is the result of a motive force (F_M) received by the actuator portion **3102** of the engagement member **3100**. For example, in some embodiments the actuator portion **3102** is operably coupled to receive the motive force F_M from a motive assembly **3400**.

[0088] As depicted in FIG. **7**, the engagement member **3100** includes the contact face **3104** that is configured to contact a portion of the slide **102**. Thus, in certain operational conditions, movement of the engagement member **3100** can produce movement of the slide **102**. In other operational conditions, the contact between contact face **3104** and the slide **102** can limit movement of the slide **102**. In some embodiments, the contact between the contact face **3104** and the portions slide **102** facilitates the transfer of a portion of the motive force (F_M) to the slide **102** in a proximal direction (P).

[0089] In some embodiments, the engagement member **3100** is positioned at least partially between the slide **102** and the frame **110** of the handgun. In such embodiments, the engagement member **3100** is oriented to engage a bottom face **103** of the slide **102**. For example, in some embodiments, the engagement member **3100** is a toothed wheel positioned to engage a corresponding toothed portion of the slide **102**.

[0090] As described for previous embodiments, in some embodiments the engagement member **3100** is configured to move relative to the frame **110** between a lock position (L_P) (as depicted in FIG. **7**) and an unlock position (not shown). In some embodiments, the engagement member **3100** is configured to transition between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position while remaining movably coupled to the handgun **100**. In other words, in some embodiments, the engagement member **3100** (and the safety system **3000**) remains coupled to the handgun **100** when transitioned between the lock and unlock positions. For example, in some embodiments the engagement member **3100**, is configured to rotate between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position. The lock position (L_P) corresponds to a separation distance (SD) between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** of the handgun **100** and a primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) of the handgun **100**. In other words, the movement of the slide **102** (and the resultant longitudinal movement of the supported primer actuator **144**) in response to the portion of the motive force (F_M) transferred by the engagement member **3100** transitioning to the lock position (L_P) establishes the separation distance (SD). Said another way, the proximal movement of the slide **102** results in a proximal shift of the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}) of the primer actuator **144** relative to the frame **110**, and thus the barrel **120**.

[0091] The separation distance (SD) has a magnitude that precludes contact between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** (e.g., the firing pin) and the primer **136** of a chambered cartridge **130** even if the firing mechanism **140** is actuated. Said another way, the magnitude of the separation distance (SD) is such that the point of maximal distal travel (e.g., the distal limit of the nominal range of travel (T_{PA})) is proximal to, and separated from, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}). Insofar as the separation distance (SD) precludes any contact between the primer actuator **144** and the primer **136**, the handgun **100** is rendered inoperable (e.g., made safe) so long as the separation distance (SD) is maintained.

[0092] The primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) is a plane orthogonal to the longitudinal axis (L) of the handgun **100**. The primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) corresponds to the nominal longitudinal position at which a proximal face of the primer **136** would lie if/when a cartridge **130** were/is seated in the chamber **128**. In other words, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) corresponds to the longitudinal position at which the distal end **146** would first contact the primer **136** during the discharging of the handgun **100**. In some embodiments, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) may be congruent with a plane defined by a maximal proximal portion of the chamber end **124** of the barrel **120**.

[0093] In some embodiments, the lock position (L_P) corresponds to a fully-retracted position of the slide **102**. In other words, when the engagement member **3100** is in the lock position (L_P), the slide **102** is at a point of maximal proximal travel (e.g., in contact with a proximal stop). Said another way, in some embodiments, when the engagement member **3100** is in the lock position (L_P), the slide **102** is to the rear. The lock position (L_P) corresponding to the fully-retracted position of the slide **102** also corresponds to a maximal separation distance (SD) between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** of the handgun **100** and the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) of the handgun **100**.

[0094] As depicted in FIG. **7**, in some embodiments, the movement of the slide **102** in the proximal direction in response to the motive force (F_M) applied via the engagement member **3100** ejects (E) a cartridge **130** from the chamber **128** of the barrel **120**. In other words, when the safety system **3000** is actuated to make safe the handgun **100**, the transition of the engagement member **3100** to the lock position (L_P) facilitates the ejecting (shown by the arrow E) of a chambered cartridge **130**. The cartridge **130** is the ejected (E) via an ejector mechanism (not shown) of the handgun **100**. It should be appreciated that ejecting (E) the cartridge **130** during the making safe of the handgun **100** may facilitate the storage of the handgun **100** with an empty chamber **128**.

[0095] The unlock position corresponds to a nominal position (similar to the nominal position P_N shown in FIG. **3**) of the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** along the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}). The nominal position may be proximal to the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) such that a nominal clearance exists between the distal end **146** and the primer **136**. In some embodiments, the nominal position corresponds to the longitudinal position of the distal end **146** when the handgun **100** is in an uncocked state with the slide **102** in the default, slide-forward position. However, in additional embodiments, the nominal position corresponds to the nominal longitudinal position of the distal end **146** when the handgun **100** is in a half-cocked state or a cocked (e.g., fully cocked) state with the slide **102** in the default, slide-forward position. In other words, when the engagement member **3100** is in the unlock position, the handgun **100** may be in an operational state/condition from which the handgun **100** may be discharged to engage a target.

[0096] In some embodiments transitioning the engagement member **3100** from the lock position (L_P) to the unlock position facilitates a distal movement (not shown) of the slide **102**. In other words, the transition (e.g., the linear movement) of the engagement member **3100** to the unlock position (U_P) may remove a restriction on the longitudinal movement (e.g., movement in the distal direction relative to the frame **110**) of the slide **102**, thereby allowing the slide **102** to return to the nominal, default slide-forward position (as depicted in FIG. **1**) in response to the force applied via the recoil spring **104**.

[0097] In some embodiments, the distal movement of the slide **102** seats(S) a cartridge **130** in the chamber **128** of the handgun **100**. For example, unlocking of the safety system **3000** permits the transition of the engagement member **3100** from the lock position (L_P). This transition allows the slide **102** to move distally. In accordance with the nominal operation of the handgun **100**, the distal movement of the slide **102** strips a cartridge **130'** from a loaded magazine (not shown) inserted in the handgun **100** and seats the cartridge **130** in the chamber **128**. In other words, in some embodiments, the unlocking of the safety system **3000** results in the chambering of a cartridge **130** (e.g., seating a cartridge **130**

in the chamber **128**) and the placing of the handgun **100** in an operational state, from which the handgun **100** may be discharged/employed.

[0098] In some embodiments, the safety system **3000** includes the lock mechanism **3200**, which is operably coupled to the engagement member **3100**. As depicted in FIG. **7**, the lock mechanism **3200** is positioned within a cavity **3202** defined at least partially by the frame **110** of the handgun **100**. The lock mechanism **3200** is positioned to restrict the movement of the engagement member **3100** from the locked position (L_P) while the lock mechanism is engaged. In other words, the lock mechanism **3200** maintains the engagement member **3100** (and therefore the engaged slide **102**) in a fixed position (e.g., the position (L_P)) relative to the frame **110**. In some embodiments, the lock mechanism **3200** may be a mechanical lock mechanism wherein the lock mechanism **3200** mechanically engages a portion of the engagement member **3100**, such as via at least one pin, a catch, a locking bar, a cam, and/or other suitable structure. In some embodiments, the lock mechanism **2200** may utilize a magnetic force to restrict the movement of the engagement member **3100**. For example, the lock mechanism **3200** may be configured to magnetically engage the engagement member **3100** directly or may utilize a magnetic field to restrict the rotation of the actuator portion **3102** of the engagement member **3100**.

[0099] As further depicted in FIG. **7**, the safety system **3000** includes the user interface **3300**, which is operably coupled to the lock mechanism **3200**. The user interface **3300** is configured to transition the lock mechanism **3200** between an engaged state and a disengaged state. In other words, the user interface **3300** is employed by an authorized user to facilitate the movement of the engagement member **3100** between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position by locking or unlocking the lock mechanism **3200**. Once unlocked, the safety system **3000** remains unlocked until the locking mechanism **3200** is affirmatively reengaged by an operator.

[0100] The user interface **3300** may include a biometric user identification (e.g., fingerprint identification) unit, a radio frequency identification reader, a numerical input apparatus, a microphone, a magnetic key, a mechanical key, and/or other input system configured to authenticate an authorized user. For example, the user interface **3300** may, in some embodiments, include a fingerprint sensor operably coupled to a biometric processor and a data storage device containing stored identification data for authorized users. The fingerprint sensor may be an optical sensor, a thermal sensor, and/or a pressure sensor and may be configured as a static sensor or a swipe sensor. Additionally, in some embodiments the user interface **3300** includes a wireless communication unit that facilitates the remote operation of the safety system **3000** via a wireless network, a cellular network, and/or a Bluetooth connection.

[0101] In some embodiments, a GPS module **3302** is operably coupled to the user interface **3300**. The GPS module **3302** facilitates position tracking of the handgun **100** via the safety system **3000** coupled thereto. For example, the GPS module **3302** may the employed in conjunction with a geo-fence (e.g., a region with boundaries that are defined by GPS coordinates). In some embodiments an embodiment, an authorized user of the handgun **100** may be alerted in the event the handgun **100** departs the geo-fence. In additional embodiments, the user interface **3300** may be disabled upon the departure of the handgun **100** from the geo-fence. In further embodiments, the user interface **3300** may be configured to transition the lock mechanism **3200** to, or maintain the lock mechanism **3200** in, the engaged state following the departure of the handgun **100** from the geo-fence.

[0102] As depicted in FIG. **7**, in some embodiments the safety system **3000** includes a motive assembly **3400**. The motive assembly **3400** is operably coupled to the actuator portion **3102** of the engagement member **3100**. The motive assembly **3400** is configured to generate the motive force (F_M). In some embodiments, the motive force (F_M) is generated in response to a user input, such as may be received via the user interface **3300**. The motive assembly **3400** may, for example, include a motor assembly, a pneumatic assembly, and/or a spring assembly configured to generate the motive force (F_M). In other words, the motive assembly **3400** includes a mechanism that transforms thermal, chemical, electrical, pressure, or any other source of energy into the mechanical energy represented by the motive force (F_M).

[0103] In some embodiments, the safety system **3000**, via the motive assembly **3400**, may facilitate the single-handed chambering of a cartridge **130** and/or clearing of a malfunction of the handgun **100** via the cycling of the handgun **100**. More specifically, the handgun **100** may be maintained in a deployed orientation (e.g., with the muzzle **122** pointed downrange) in the hand of an authorized user while the authorized user actuates the unlocked safety system **3000**. The authorized user may actuate the safety system **3000** via an engagement of the user interface **3300** with a portion (e.g., a finger) of the same hand holding the handgun **100**. Upon actuation, the motive assembly **3400** may drive the engagement member **3100**, and thus the slide **102**, proximally (e.g., rearward). The proximal motion of the engagement member **3100** and the slide **102** may continue until the slide **102** encounters a slide stop. The proximal motion of the slide **102** may eject any chambered, misfed, or jammed cartridge **130**. Once the slide **102** has moved proximally a maximal distance, the authorized user may unlock the safety system **3000** via an engagement of the user interface **3300** with the portion of the same hand holding the handgun **100**. The user interface **3300** may be engaged by the portion of the hand of the authorized users while continuing to maintain the handgun **100** in the deployed orientation. With the safety system **3000** unlocked, the slide **102** is moved distally into the nominal, default slide-forward position by the recoil spring **104**. The distal movement of the slide **102** seats a cartridge **130** in the chamber **128** of the handgun **100**. As such, the handgun **100** may be cycled utilizing only one hand of the authorized user to place the handgun **100** in an operational configuration.

[0104] In some embodiments, the motive assembly **3400** may also be configured to serve as the lock mechanism **3200**. In other words, the motive assembly **3400** may be configured to both generate the motive force (F_M) and to restrict the movement of the engagement member **3100** from the lock position (L_P). For example, in some embodiments, the motive assembly **3400** may include a stepper motor (not shown) and a lead screw (not shown) to which the engagement member **3100** is coupled. The stepper motor may be employed to hold the engagement member **3100** in the lock position (L_P) by maintaining the lead screw in a fixed rotational position.

[0105] FIGS. **8** and **9** depict side views of an embodiment of a safety system **4000** coupled to a portion of the handgun **100**. FIG. **10** depicts a front view of an embodiment of the safety system **4000** coupled to a portion of the handgun **100**. In FIGS. **8-10**, the safety system **4000** is depicted in an unlocked configuration. FIG. **11** depicts a perspective view of an embodiment of the safety system **4000** coupled to the handgun **100**, with the safety system **4000** being depicted in a locked configuration. Additionally, FIG. **12** depicts an exploded perspective view of the safety system **4000**. As described for previous embodiments, in some embodiments the safety system **4000** develops a forced malfunction of the handgun **100** that precludes the handgun **100** from discharging when the safety system **4000** is in a locked configuration. In some embodiments, the safety system **4000** is coupled to an existing handgun **100** as depicted in FIGS. **8-11**. Although shown and described as being coupled to the handgun **100**, the safety system **4000** can be coupled to and/or used with any suitable firearm.

[0106] In FIGS. **8-10**, the safety system **4000** is depicted in an unlocked configuration, while in FIG. **11**, the safety system **4000** is depicted in an unlocked configuration. The safety system **4000** includes an engagement member **4100**, a lock mechanism **4200**, a user interface **4300**, and a motive assembly **4400**. As described in more detail below, the safety system **4000** can allow the handgun **100** to be selectively locked (or placed in a safe, "no-fire" condition) and unlocked while remaining coupled to the handgun **100**. The engagement member **4100** is movably coupled to the handgun **100** and includes an actuator portion **4102** and a contact face **4104**. In other words, the engagement member **4100** may, in various embodiments, be configured to move/translate (e.g., slide, rotate, pivot, and/or tilt) relative to the frame **110** in accordance with the locked/unlocked configuration of the safety system **4000**. The movement/translation of the engagement member **4100** is the result of a motive force (F_M) received by the actuator portion **4102** of the engagement member **4100**. For example, in some embodiments the actuator portion **4102** is operably coupled to receive the motive force F_M from a motive assembly **4400**.

[0107] In some embodiments, the engagement member **4100** includes the contact face **4104** that is configured to contact a portion of the slide **102**. Thus, in certain operational conditions, movement of the engagement member **4100** can produce movement of the slide **102**. In other operational conditions, the contact between contact face **4104** and the slide **102** can limit movement of the slide **102**. In some embodiments, a clearance may be established between the contact face **4104** and the portion of the slide **102** when the safety system **4000** is in the unlocked configuration. Similarly stated, the contact face **4104** can be spaced apart from the slide **102** when the safety system **4000** is in the unlocked configuration. In some embodiments, the contact between the contact face **4104** and the portions slide **102** facilitates the transfer of a portion of the motive force (F_M) to the slide **102** in a proximal direction (P).

[0108] As described for previous embodiments, in some embodiments the engagement member **4100** is configured to move relative to the frame **110** between a lock position (L_P) (as depicted in FIG. **11**) and an unlock position (U_P) (as depicted in FIGS. **8** and **9**). In some embodiments, the engagement member **4100** is configured to transition between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position (U_P) while remaining movably coupled to the handgun **100**. In other words, in some embodiments, the engagement member **4100** (and the safety system **4000**) remains coupled to the handgun **100** when transitioned between the lock and unlock positions. For example, in some embodiments the engagement member **4100**, is configured to move linearly between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position (U_P). The lock position (L_P) corresponds to a separation distance (SD) between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** of the handgun **100** and a primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) of the handgun **100**. In other words, the movement of the slide **102** (and the resultant longitudinal movement of the supported primer actuator **144**) in response to the portion of the motive force (F_M) transferred by the engagement member **4100** transitioning to the lock position (L_P) establishes the separation distance (SD). Said another way, the proximal movement of the slide **102** results in a proximal shift of the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}) of the primer actuator **144** relative to the frame **110**, and thus the barrel **120**.

[0109] As depicted in FIG. **11**. the separation distance (SD) has a magnitude that precludes contact between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** (e.g., the firing pin) and the primer **136** of a chambered cartridge **130** even if the firing mechanism **140** is actuated. Said another way, the magnitude of the separation distance (SD) is such that the point of maximal distal travel (e.g., the distal limit of the nominal range of travel (T_{PA})) is proximal to, and separated from, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}). Insofar as the separation distance (SD) precludes any contact between the primer actuator **144** and the primer **136**, the handgun **100** is rendered inoperable (e.g., made safe) so long as the separation distance (SD) is maintained.

[0110] The primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) is a plane orthogonal to the longitudinal axis (L) of the handgun **100**. The primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) corresponds to the nominal longitudinal position at which a proximal face of the primer **136** would lie if/when a cartridge **130** were/is seated in the chamber **128**. In other words, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) corresponds to the longitudinal position at which the distal end **146** would first contact the primer **136** during the discharging of the handgun **100**. In some embodiments, the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) may be congruent with a plane defined by a maximal proximal portion of the chamber end **124** of the barrel **120**.

[0111] In some embodiments, the lock position (L_P) corresponds to a fully-retracted position of the slide **102**. In other words, when the engagement member **4100** is in the lock position (L_P), the slide **102** is at a point of maximal proximal travel (e.g., in contact with a proximal stop). Said another way, in some embodiments, when the engagement member **4100** is in the lock position (L_P), the slide **102** is to the rear. The lock position (L_P) corresponding to the fully-retracted position of the slide **102** also corresponds to a maximal separation distance (SD) between the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** of the handgun **100** and the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) of the handgun **100**.

[0112] In some embodiments, the movement of the slide **102** in the proximal direction in response to the motive force (F_M) applied via the engagement member **4100** ejects a cartridge **130** from the chamber **128** of the barrel **120**. In other words, when the safety system **4000** is actuated to make safe the handgun **100**, the transition of the engagement member **4100** to the lock position (L_P) (e.g., the proximal movement of the engagement member **4100**) facilitates the ejecting of a chambered cartridge **130**. The cartridge **130** is

the ejected via an ejector mechanism (not shown) of the handgun **100**. It should be appreciated that ejecting the cartridge **130** during the making safe of the handgun **100** may facilitate the storage of the handgun **100** with an empty chamber **128**.

[0113] The unlock position (U_P) corresponds to a nominal position (similar to the nominal position P_N shown in FIG. **3**) of the distal end **146** of the primer actuator **144** along the nominal range of travel (T_{PA}). The nominal position may be proximal to the primer activation plane (PL_{ACT}) such that a nominal clearance exists between the distal end **146** and the primer **136**. In some embodiments, the nominal position corresponds to the longitudinal position of the distal end **146** when the handgun **100** is in an uncocked state with the slide **102** in the default, slide-forward position. However, in additional embodiments, the nominal position corresponds to the nominal longitudinal position of the distal end **146** when the handgun **100** is in a half-cocked state or a cocked (e.g., fully cocked) state with the slide **102** in the default, slide-forward position. In other words, when the engagement member **2100** is in the unlock position (U_P), the handgun **100** may be in an operational state/condition from which the handgun **100** may be discharged to engage a target.

[0114] In some embodiments transitioning the engagement member **4100** from the lock position (L_P) to the unlock position (U_P) facilitates a distal movement of the slide **102**. In other words, the transition (e.g., the linear movement) of the engagement member **4100** to the unlock position (U_P) may remove a restriction on the longitudinal movement (e.g., movement in the distal direction relative to the frame **110**) of the slide **102**, thereby allowing the slide **102** to return to the nominal, default slide-forward position (as depicted in FIG. **1**) in response to the force applied via the recoil spring **104**.

[0115] In some embodiments, the distal movement of the slide **102** seats a cartridge **130** in the chamber **128** of the handgun **100**. For example, unlocking of the safety system **4000** permits the transition of the engagement member **4100** from the lock position (L_P) to the unlock position (U_P). This transition allows the slide **102** to move distally. In accordance with the nominal operation of the handgun **100**, the distal movement of the slide **102** strips a cartridge **130'** from a loaded magazine (not shown) inserted in the handgun **100** and seats the cartridge **130'** in the chamber **128**. In other words, in some embodiments, the unlocking of the safety system **4000** results in the chambering of a cartridge **130** (e.g., seating a cartridge **130'** in the chamber **128**) and the placing of the handgun **100** in an operational state, from which the handgun **100** may be discharged/employed.

[0116] As depicted, in some embodiments the safety system **4000** includes a motive assembly **4400**. The motive assembly **4400** is operably coupled to the actuator portion **4102** of the engagement member **4100**. The motive assembly **4400** is configured to generate the motive force (F_M). In some embodiments, the motive force (F_M) is generated in response to a user input, such as may be received via the user interface **4300**. As depicted in FIG. **12**, the motive assembly **4400** includes a motor **4420**, a lead screw **4440**, and a limit switch **4470** and/or a magnetic encoder **4480**. The motor **4420** may, for example, be a stepper motor, a servo motor, a linear motor, and/or a brushless motor configured to generate a motive force (F_M) that is greater than a force exerted on the slide **102** by the recoil spring **104**. The motor **4420** is operably coupled to an energy storage device **4430**, such as a battery and/or a capacitor, and the user interface **4300**.

[0117] The lead screw **4440** is rotatable by the motor **4420**. As depicted, the lead screw **4440** is axially aligned with the motor **4420**. However, in some embodiments, the lead screw **4440** is rotatable by the motor **4420** via a gearing assembly (not shown) and may the axially offset from the motor **4420**. The lead screw **4440** is configured to convert a rotational input from the motor **4420** into a linear motion of the engagement member **4100**. For example, in some embodiments, the engagement member **4100** is coupled to a drive nut **4450** that circumscribes the lead screw **4440**. The drive nut **4450** is formed with threads that correspond to the threads of the lead screw **4440** such that the rotation of the lead screw **4440** results in a linear motion of the drive nut **4450**. In order to prevent the rotation of the drive nut **4450**, in some embodiments, the engagement member **4100** is also slidingly coupled to a guide shaft **4460** via a linear bearing **4462**.

[0118] As further depicted in FIG. **12**, in some embodiments, the limit switch **4470** and the magnetic encoder **4480** are coupled at the opposite end of the lead screw **4440** from the motor **4420**. The limit switch **4470** is configured to terminate the generation of the motive force (F_M) when contacted by the drive nut **4450** or the engagement member **4100**. The magnetic encoder **4480** is configured to monitor rotations of the lead screw **4440**. As the thread pitch of the lead screw **4440** is known, the magnetic encoder **4480** may facilitate the monitoring of the linear distance traveled by the engagement member **4100**.

[0119] Although shown as including a motor assembly in other embodiments the motive assembly **4400** can include any suitable components or structure to move the engagement member **4100**, such as a pneumatic assembly and/or a spring assembly. In other words, the motive assembly **4400** can include any suitable mechanism that transforms thermal, chemical, electrical, pressure, or any other source of energy into the mechanical energy represented by the motive force (F_M)

[0120] In some embodiments, the safety system **4000**, via the motive assembly **4400**, may facilitate the single-handed chambering of a cartridge **130** and/or clearing of a malfunction of the handgun **100** via the cycling of the handgun **100**. More specifically, the handgun **100** may be maintained in a deployed orientation (e.g., with the muzzle **122** pointed downrange) in the hand of an authorized user while the authorized user actuates the unlocked safety system **4000**. The authorized user may actuate the safety system **4000** via an engagement of the user interface **4300** with a portion (e.g., a finger) of the same hand holding the handgun **100**. Upon actuation, the motive assembly **4400** may drive the engagement member **4100**, and thus the slide **102**, proximally (e.g., rearward). The proximal motion of the engagement member **4100** and the slide **102** may continue until the slide **102** encounters a slide stop. The proximal motion of the slide **102** may eject any chambered, misfed, or jammed cartridge **130**. Once the slide **102** has moved proximally a maximal distance, the authorized user may unlock the safety system **4000** via an engagement of the user interface **4300** with the portion of the same hand holding the handgun **100**. The user interface **4300** may be engaged by the portion of the hand of the authorized users while continuing to maintain the handgun **100** in the deployed orientation. With the

safety system **4000** unlocked, the slide **102** is moved distally into the nominal, default slide-forward position by the recoil spring **104**. The distal movement of the slide **102** seats a cartridge **130** in the chamber **128** of the handgun **100**. As such, the handgun **100** may be cycled utilizing only one hand of the authorized user to place the handgun **100** in an operational configuration.

[0121] In some embodiments, the motive assembly **4400** may also be configured to serve as the lock mechanism **4200**. In other words, the motive assembly **4400** may be configured to both generate the motive force (F_M) and to restrict the movement of the engagement member **4100** from the lock position (L_P). For example, in some embodiments, the motor **4420** is configured as a stepper motor that is coupled to the lead screw **4440**. The motor **4420** may, thus, hold the engagement member **4100** in the lock position (L_P) by maintaining the lead screw **4440** in a specified, fixed rotational position until unlocked via the user interface **4300**.

[0122] In some embodiments, the safety system **4000** includes a lock mechanism **4200** that is a component separate from the motive assembly **4400**. In such an embodiment, the lock mechanism **4200** is operably coupled to the engagement member **4100**. The lock mechanism **4200** is positioned to restrict the movement of the engagement member **4100** from the locked position (L_P) while the lock mechanism is engaged. In other words, the lock mechanism **4200** maintains the engagement member **4100** (and therefore the engaged slide **102**) in a fixed position (e.g., the position (L_P)) relative to the frame **110**. In some embodiments, the lock mechanism **4200** may be a mechanical lock mechanism wherein the lock mechanism **4200** mechanically engages a portion of the engagement member **4100**, such as via at least one pin, a catch, a locking bar, a cam, and/or other suitable structure. In some embodiments, the lock mechanism **4200** may utilize a magnetic force to restrict the movement of the engagement member **4100**. For example, the lock mechanism **4200** may be configured to magnetically engage the engagement member **4100**.

[0123] In some embodiments, the safety system **4000** includes the user interface **4300**, which is operably coupled to the lock mechanism **4200** and/or the motive assembly **4400**. The user interface **4300** is configured to transition the lock mechanism **4200** and/or the motive assembly **4400** between an engaged state and a disengaged state. In other words, the user interface **4300** is employed by an authorized user to facilitate the movement of the engagement member **4100** between the lock position (L_P) and the unlock position (U_P) by locking or unlocking the lock mechanism **4200** and/or the motive assembly **4400**. Once unlocked, the safety system **4000** remains unlocked until the locking mechanism **4200** and/or the motive assembly **4400** is affirmatively reengaged by an operator.

[0124] The user interface **4300** may include a biometric user identification (e.g., fingerprint identification) unit, a radio frequency identification reader, a numerical input apparatus, a microphone, a magnetic key, a mechanical key, and/or other input system configured to authenticate an authorized user. For example, the user interface **4300** may, in some embodiments, include a fingerprint sensor **4310** operably coupled to a biometric processor **4320** and a data storage device **4330** containing stored identification data for authorized users. The fingerprint sensor may be an optical sensor, a thermal sensor, and/or a pressure sensor and may be configured as a static sensor or a swipe sensor. The user interface **4300** may also be operably coupled to the energy storage device **4430**. Additionally, in some embodiments the user interface **4300** includes a wireless communication unit that facilitates the remote operation of the safety system **4000** via a wireless network, a cellular network, and/or a Bluetooth connection.

[0125] In some embodiments, a GPS module (not shown) may be operably coupled to the user interface **4300**. The GPS module facilitates position tracking of the handgun **100** via the safety system **4000** coupled thereto. For example, the GPS module may the employed in conjunction with a geo-fence (e.g., a region with boundaries that are defined by GPS coordinates). In some embodiments an embodiment, an authorized user of the handgun **100** may be alerted in the event the handgun **100** departs the geo-fence. In additional embodiments, the user interface **4300** may be disabled upon the departure of the handgun **100** from the geo-fence. In further embodiments, the user interface **4300** may be configured to transition the lock mechanism **4200** to, or maintain the lock mechanism **4200** and/or the motive assembly **4400** in, the engaged state following the departure of the handgun **100** from the geo-fence.

[0126] In some embodiments, the safety system **4000** includes a housing **4500**. The housing **4500** provides the structure for support and mounting of the safety system **4000** to the handgun **100**. The housing **4500** is formed from materials having sufficient strength to prevent access to internal components of the safety system **4000**. For example, in various embodiments, the housing **4500** is formed from a metal, a reinforced plastic, and/or composite. In some embodiments, the housing **4500** is the unitary structure defining at least one internal cavity. In other embodiments, the housing **4500** is formed by the coupling of multiple housing members that are separately formed. For example, the housing **4500** may be formed at least from a first housing half **4502** and a second housing half **4504**.

[0127] As depicted in FIGS. **8**, **10**, and **11**, the housing **4500** supports the user interface **4300**. For example, the housing **4500** may define an external recess **4540** in which the user interface **4300** may be secured. The housing **4500** also includes a coupling portion **4510**. The coupling portion **4510** is configured to receive a portion of the handgun **100**, such as the mounting structure **116**. In other words, the housing **4500**, and thus the safety system **4000**, may be fixedly coupled to the handgun **100** via an interface between the coupling portion **4510** and the mounting structure **116**. Although shown as being against or engaged with the trigger guard **114**, in other embodiments, the housing **4500** may, for example, be coupled to the handgun **100** and a position that is forward of the trigger guard **114**. For example the housing **4500** can be similar to the housing **1500** shown in FIGS. **3** and **4** and can establish a spacing between the housing **4500** and the trigger guard **114**.

[0128] As depicted in FIG. **9**, in some embodiments, safety system **4000** includes at least one fastener **4512**. The fastener(s) **4512** is positioned adjacent the coupling portion **4510**. For example, the fastener(s) **4512** may be inserted into a threaded passage defined by a portion of the coupling portion **4510**. The fastener(s) **4512** is oriented to secure the mounting structure **116** of the handgun **100** within the coupling portion **4510**. In some embodiments, the fastener (s) **4512** is at least partially occluded by a portion of the engagement member **4100** when the engagement member

4100 is in the lock position. As such, the engagement member **4100** preclude the loosening and/or removal of the fastener(s) **4512** while the safety system **4000** is in the locked configuration. Correspondingly, the transitioning of the engagement member **4100** to the unlock position (U_P) may permit access to the fastener(s) **4512** so that the safety system **4000** may be decoupled from the handgun **100** only when in the unlocked configuration.

[0129] In some embodiments, the housing **4500** also defines a lock cavity **4520** supporting at least a portion of the lock mechanism **4200**. The lock cavity **4520** may, for example, be defined by an inner face **4506** of the housing **4500**. Additionally, the housing **4500** defines an interface orifice **4530**. The interface orifice **4530** is oriented to facilitate the operable coupling of the engagement member **4100** to the lock mechanism **4200**. The interface orifice **4530** may, for example, correspond to a slot or hole through which a portion of the engagement member **4100** may be inserted. The interface orifice **4530** is sized to facilitate a desired degree of travel of the engagement member **4100**.

[0130] FIG. **13** is a perspective view of an embodiment of an engagement member **4100** for use with a safety system for a handgun **100** (FIG. **1**), such as with the safety system **1000**, the safety system **2000**, and/or the safety system **4000**. The engagement member **4100** is movably coupled to the handgun and includes the actuator portion **4102** and the contact face **4104**. In other words, the engagement member **4100** may, in various embodiments, be configured to move/translate (e.g., slide, rotate, pivot, and/or tilt) relative to the frame of the handgun in accordance with the locked/unlocked configuration of the safety system. The movement/translation of the engagement member **4100** is the result of a motive force (e.g., motive force (F_M) (FIG. **11**)) received by the actuator portion **4102** of the engagement member **4100**. As such, in some embodiments, the actuator portion **4102** is operably coupled to receive the motive force from a motive assembly, such as the motive assembly **2400** or the motive assembly **4400**.

[0131] The engagement member **4100** defines a muzzle orifice **4106** (e.g., an opening) that is aligned with a distal end (e.g., the muzzle) of the barrel of the handgun. The muzzle orifice **4106** is sized to circumscribe the muzzle of the handgun. In other words, the muzzle orifice **4106** has a diameter that is greater than an outer diameter of the handgun barrel at the muzzle. Accordingly, engagement member **4100** maintains a clearance with (e.g., does not obstruct) the muzzle of the handgun. Said another way, the muzzle orifice **4106** facilitates the departure of a projectile (e.g., a bullet) from the distal end of the barrel. Therefore, the handgun may be employed while the engagement member **4100** remains movably coupled thereto. In other words, in operation, a bullet departing the muzzle of the handgun passes through the muzzle orifice **4106** prior to continuing downrange.

[0132] In addition to the muzzle orifice **4106**, the engagement member **4100** also defines a guide recess **4108**. The guide recess **4108** establishes a clearance between the recoil spring guide of the handgun and the engagement member **4100**. The guide recess **4108**, therefore, facilitates a longitudinal movement of the engagement member **4100** by permitting a portion of the engagement member **4100** to pass between the barrel and the recoil spring guide of the handgun without contacting the recoil spring guide.

[0133] As shown, the portion of the engagement member **4100** defining the muzzle orifice **4106** and/or the guide recess **4108** is coupled to the actuator portion **4102** via a connection arm **4130**. The connection arm **4130** transfers the motive force from the actuator portion **4102** the contact face **4104**. In some embodiments, the connection arm **4130** defines a medial face profile **4112** (e.g., a profile in the face of the connection arm **4130** that is nearest a longitudinal midline of the safety system). The medial face profile **4112** is formed to conform with a portion of an outer face of a housing (e.g., the housing **1500**, the housing **2500**, and/or the housing **4500**) of the safety system. By conforming with the portion of the outer face of the housing, the medial face profile **4112** may facilitate an unobstructed longitudinal movement of the engagement member **4100**.

[0134] In some embodiments, the actuator portion **4102** is formed to facilitate the coupling of the engagement member **4100** to the motive assembly, such as the motive assembly **4400**. Accordingly, the engagement member **4100** defines a lead screw opening **4114** configured to at least partially circumscribe a lead screw (e.g., the lead screw **4440**), or other similar structure, of the motive assembly. Additionally, the engagement member **4100** defines a plurality of fasteners locations **4116** (e.g., through holes, threaded holes/inserts, and/or pins) for coupling the actuator portion **4102** to a drive nut (e.g., drive nut **4450**) of the motive assembly.

[0135] In order to counter the torque of the motive assembly, in some embodiments, the engagement member **4100** defines a guideway opening **4118**. The guideway opening **4118** is sized to receive a guide rail (e.g., the guide shaft **4460**) of the motive assembly. In some embodiments, the guideway opening **4118** is sized to receive a linear bearing configured to move slidingly along the guide rail. Additionally, the engagement member **4100** defines a stop protrusion **4120** the stop protrusion is configured to engage a portion of the safety system, such as a portion of the housing and/or a portion of the motive assembly, to counter the torque generated by the motive assembly. In some embodiments, the lead screw opening **4114** may be positioned laterally between the stop protrusion **4120** and the guideway opening **4118**.

[0136] FIGS. **14** and **15** are a front view and a top view respectively of an embodiment of an engagement member **6100** of the safety system for use with a safety system for a handgun **100** (FIG. **1**), such as with the safety system **1000**, the safety system **2000**, and/or the safety system **4000**. The engagement member **6100** is arranged orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of the handgun and is movably coupled to the handgun. The engagement member **6100** includes a coupling portion **6101**, at least one actuator portion **6102**, and a contact face **6104**. In other words, the engagement member **6100** may, in various embodiments, be configured to move/translate relative to the frame of the handgun in accordance with the locked/unlocked configuration of the safety system. The movement/translation of the engagement member **6100** is the result of a motive force motive force (F_M) received by the actuator portion(s) **6102** of the engagement member **6100**. For example, in some embodiments the actuator portion(s) **6102** can include at least one grip portion **6122** that allows a user to manually grasp or manipulate the engagement member **6100** to move the engagement member **6100** relative to the frame. In other embodiments, the actuator portion(s) **6102** is operably coupled to receive the

motive force from a motive assembly, similar to the motive assembly **2400** or the motive assembly **4400**.

[0137] The engagement member **6100** defines a muzzle orifice **6106** (e.g., an opening) that is aligned with a distal end (e.g., the muzzle) of the barrel of the handgun. The muzzle orifice **6106** is sized to circumscribe the muzzle of the handgun. In other words, the muzzle orifice **6106** has a diameter that is greater than an outer diameter of the handgun barrel at the muzzle. Accordingly, engagement member **6100** maintains a clearance with (e.g., does not obstruct) the muzzle of the handgun. Said another way, the muzzle orifice **6106** facilitates the departure of a projectile (e.g., a bullet) from the distal end of the barrel. Therefore, the handgun may be employed while the engagement member **6100** remains movably coupled thereto. In other words, in operation, a bullet departing the muzzle of the handgun passes through the muzzle orifice **6106** prior to continuing downrange.

[0138] In addition to the muzzle orifice **6106**, the engagement member **6100**, also defines a guide opening **6124**. The guide opening **6124** establishes a clearance between the recoil spring guide of the handgun and the engagement member **6100**. The guide opening **6124**, therefore, facilitates a longitudinal movement of the engagement member **6100** by permitting a portion of the engagement member **6100** to pass between the barrel and the recoil spring guide of the handgun without contacting the recoil spring guide.

[0139] In some embodiments, the engagement member **6100** defines a sighting recess **6126**. The sighting recess **6126** is in visual alignment with the sights of the handgun. As such, the sighting recess **6126** may facilitate the alignment of the handgun with a target while the engagement member **6100** remains movably coupled to the handgun. Said another way, the

[0140] As depicted in FIGS. **14** and **15**, in some embodiments, the engagement member **6100** includes at least one placement guide **6128**. The placement guide(s) **6128** is positioned to guide the placement of the finger(s) of the operator of the handgun when manually applying the motive force (F_M) to the engagement member **6100**. The placement guide(s) **6128** guide/direct the finger(s) of the operator to the grip portion(s) **6122**. The placement guide(s) **6128** also forms a barrier that restricts the placement of the finger(s) in front of the muzzle. In other words, the placement guide(s) **6128** limits the potential for a portion of the hand of the operator to be placed in the potential flightpath of a discharged projectile.

[0141] As shown, the portion of the engagement member **6100** defining the muzzle orifice **6106** and/or the guide recess **6108** is coupled to the coupling portion **6101** via a first connection arm **6132** and a second connection arm **6134**. The first and second connection arms **6132**, **6134** may transfer the motive force from the coupling portion, when configured as the actuator portion **6102**, to the contact face **6104**. In some embodiments, the coupling portion **6101** may be positioned between the first and second connection arms **6132**, **6134**.

[0142] In some embodiments, the coupling portion **6101** is formed to facilitate the coupling of the engagement member **6100** to the motive assembly, such as the motive assembly **4400**. Accordingly, the engagement member **6100** defines a coupling orifice **6136** configured to at least partially circumscribe a lead screw similar to lead screw **4440**, or other similar structure, of the motive assembly. Additionally, the engagement member **6100** defines a plurality of fasteners locations **6116** (e.g., through holes, threaded holes/inserts, and/or pins) for coupling the actuator portion **6102** to a drive nut (e.g., similar drive nut **4450**) of the motive assembly. However, in some embodiments, the coupling portion **6101** is formed to receive a guide rail (e.g., similar to guide shaft **4460**) via the coupling orifice **6136**. In such an embodiment, the coupling orifice **6136** is sized to receive a linear bearing configured to move slidingly along the guide rail.

[0143] FIG. **16** is a flow chart of a method **500** for making safe a handgun according to an embodiment. The method **500** may, in an embodiment, be performed via a safety system, such as safety system **1000**, safety system **2000**, safety system **3000**, and safety system **4000** as described with reference to FIGS. **3-12**. However, it should be appreciated that in various embodiments, aspects of the method **500** may be accomplished via additional embodiments of the safety system or components thereof, such as engagement member **5100** and engagement member **6100** as described herein. Accordingly, the method **500** may be implemented on any suitable device as described herein. Those of ordinary skill in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will understand that various steps of the method **500** or any of the other methods disclosed herein may be adapted, modified, rearranged, performed simultaneously, or modified in various ways without deviating from the scope of the present disclosure.

[0144] As shown at (**502**), the method **500** includes applying a motive force in a proximal direction to an engagement member of the safety system, with the engagement member being movably coupled to the handgun. As shown at (**504**), the method **500** includes transferring at least a portion of the motive force to the slide via a contact face of the engagement member. The contact face of the engagement member is in contact with the slide so as to develop a proximal movement of the slide. As shown at (**506**), the method **500** includes establishing a separation distance between a distal end of a primer actuator of the handgun and a primer activation plane of the handgun. The separation distance precludes contact between the primer actuator and a cartridge primer in response to an actuation of a firing mechanism of the handgun. The separation distance corresponds to a lock position of the engagement member. As shown at (**508**), the method **500** includes fixing the engagement member at the lock position via a lock mechanism of the safety system that is operably coupled to the engagement member. Said another way, the method **500** includes limiting movement of the engagement member via the lock mechanism. Additionally, as shown at (**510**), the method **500** includes maintaining the separation distance by precluding a distal movement of the slide via the engagement member positioned at the lock position.

[0145] In some embodiments, the method **500** includes ejecting a cartridge from a chamber of a barrel of the handgun in response to the proximal movement of the slide. In some embodiments, the motive force that develops the proximal movement of the slide is manually applied to the engagement member via an interface between an operator of the handgun and an actuator portion of the engagement member. However, in some embodiments, the method **500** includes applying the motive force to an actuator portion of the engagement member via a motive assembly.

[0146] In some embodiments, the method **500** includes maintaining the engagement member in the unlock position

until a lock command is received via a user input of the safety system. In other words, the engagement member remains stationary in either the lock position or the unlock position until a transition is commanded via the user input. As such, once the safety system is placed in an unlocked configuration, the handgun remains operational until the safety system is affirmatively locked by the user. For example, once the safety system is placed in the unlocked configuration, the handgun may be discharged multiple times without necessitating further interaction (e.g., user authentication) with the safety system.

[0147] In some embodiments, after the fixing of the engagement member at the lock position, the method **500** includes unlocking the lock mechanism in response to a user input via a user interface of the safety system. In response to the unlocking of the lock mechanism, the method **500** may also include transitioning the engagement member from the lock position to an unlock position. In such an embodiment, the transition to the unlock position allows a distal movement of the slide. Said another way, unlocking the lock mechanism releases the engagement member thereby permitting the slide to assume a default slide-forward position in response to a force exerted by the recoil spring of the handgun. In some embodiments, the method **500** includes maintaining the coupling of the engagement member to the handgun when the engagement member is in the lock position, the unlock position, and during a transition between the lock position and the unlock position. Additionally, in some embodiments, the method **500** includes seating a cartridge in a chamber of a barrel of the handgun in response to the distal movement of the slide following the unlocking of the lock mechanism. In other words, the distal movement of the slide seats a cartridge from the magazine of the handgun and chambers the cartridge. Chambering the cartridge places the handgun in an operational condition from which the handgun may be discharged. In some embodiments, an opening defined by the engagement member facilitates the departure of a projectile from the distal end of the barrel. As such, in some embodiments, the method **500** includes actuating a firing mechanism of the handgun to discharge the cartridge while maintaining the coupling of the engagement member to the handgun following the unlocking of the lock mechanism.

[0148] FIG. **17** is a flow chart of a method **600** for engaging a target via a handgun equipped with a safety system according to an embodiment. The method **600** may, in an embodiment, be performed via a safety system, such as safety system **1000**, safety system **2000**, safety system **3000**, and safety system **4000** as described with reference to FIGS. **3-12**. However, it should be appreciated that in various embodiments, aspects of the method **600** may be accomplished via additional embodiments of the safety system or components thereof, such as engagement member **6100** as described herein. Accordingly, the method **600** may be implemented on any suitable device as described herein. Those of ordinary skill in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will understand that various steps of the method **500** or any of the other methods disclosed herein may be adapted, modified, rearranged, performed simultaneously, or modified in various ways without deviating from the scope of the present disclosure.

[0149] As shown at (**602**), the method **600** includes drawing a handgun from a holster. As shown at (**604**), the method **600** includes initiating a movement arc of the handgun to bring the handgun to bear on a target. After drawing the handgun but prior to bringing the handgun to bear on the target, the method **600** includes, as shown at (**606**), unlocking a safety system during the movement arc. The safety system being coupled to the handgun. As shown at (**608**), the method **600** includes bearing on the target with the handgun in an operational state. As shown at (**610**), the method includes engaging the target by discharging the handgun while the safety system remains coupled thereto. In other words, by unlocking the safety system during the movement arc the handgun is transitioned from a nonoperational state at the moment it is drawn from the holster to an operational state when it is brought to bear on the target. It should be appreciated that unlocking the safety system during the movement arc facilitates a more rapid target acquisition than may otherwise be possible with systems that require the unlocking of a holster, the removal of a locking apparatus, and/or the cycling of the handgun following the unlocking of the locking apparatus.

[0150] While various embodiments have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only, and not limitation. Where methods and/or schematics described above indicate certain events and/or flow patterns occurring in certain order, the ordering of certain events and/or operations may be modified. While the embodiments have been particularly shown and described, it will be understood that various changes in form and details may be made. For example, although the safety system **4000** is shown and described as including an electric motor to produce a motive force against the engagement member, in other embodiments, the safety system **4000** (and any of the safety systems described herein) can be devoid of a motive assembly. For example, in some embodiments the safety system **4000** can be manually manipulated by the user to move the engagement member.

[0151] As another example, although the although the safety system **4000** is shown and described as including a housing that is coupled to the handgun, in other embodiments, the safety system **4000** (and any of the safety systems described herein) can include a housing that is integrally formed with the frame of the handgun.

[0152] Although various embodiments have been described as having particular features and/or combinations of components, other embodiments are possible having a combination of any features and/or components from any of embodiments as discussed above. For example, any of the safety systems described herein can include any of the energy storage members or motive assemblies of any of the other safety systems described herein (e.g., the motive assembly **4400**). As another example, any of the safety systems described herein can include any of the engagement members described herein (e.g., engagement member **3100**, engagement member **4100**, engagement member **5100**, or engagement member **6100**).

What is claimed is:

1. A safety system for a firearm, the safety system comprising:

a housing fixedly coupled to a frame of the firearm;

a lock assembly positioned at least partially within the housing, the lock assembly having an engaged state in which the lock assembly maintains a separation distance between a distal end of a primer actuator of the firearm and a primer activation plane of the firearm, a

portion of the lock assembly being rotatable upon a transition the lock assembly to a disengaged state; and

a user interface coupled to the housing and operably coupled to the lock assembly, the user interface being configured to receive a user input to transition the lock assembly to the disengaged state.

2. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

the housing remains fixedly coupled to the frame of the firearm on a condition that the lock assembly is in the engaged state and on a condition that the lock assembly is in the disengaged state.

3. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

the firearm is in a nonoperable state on a condition that the lock assembly is in the engaged state; and

the firearm is in an operable state on a condition that the lock assembly is in the disengaged state.

4. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

the lock assembly includes a motor operably coupled to an energy storage device; and

the motor is rotatable in response to the user input to transition the lock assembly to the disengaged state.

5. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

the user interface includes at least one of a fingerprint reader, a radio frequency identification reader, a numerical input apparatus, a microphone, a magnetic key, or a mechanical key.

6. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

the housing is fixedly coupled to the frame at a location that is distal to a trigger guard of the firearm.

7. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

a portion of the frame to which the housing is fixedly coupled is between a barrel of the firearm and the housing.

8. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

the firearm is a handgun;

the handgun includes a slide;

the slide is movable along a first side of the frame; and

the housing is fixedly coupled to a second side of the frame opposite the slide such that at least a portion of the frame is between the housing and the slide.

9. The safety system of claim **8**, wherein:

the slide is in a fully-retracted position on a condition that the lock assembly is in the engaged state; and

the transition of the lock assembly to the disengaged state facilitates a distal movement of the slide that chambers a cartridge to place the handgun in an operational condition.

10. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

the transition of the lock assembly to the engaged state is configured to establish a forced malfunction of the firearm.

11. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

the portion of the lock assembly is rotatable in response to a motive force generated by a spring on a condition that the lock assembly is transitioned to the disengaged state in response to the user input.

12. The safety system of claim **1**, wherein:

the housing includes:

a coupling portion configured to receive a mounting structure of the frame of the firearm, and

a lock cavity defined by an inner face of the housing, the lock cavity supporting at least a portion of the lock assembly.

13. The safety system of claim **12**, further comprising:

at least one fastener to secure the mounting structure of the firearm within the coupling portion, the at least one fastener being at least partially occluded on a condition that the lock assembly is in the engaged state.

14. A method of handling a firearm with a safety system, the firearm including a movable component and a frame, the safety system being fixedly coupled to the frame and including a lock assembly, the method comprising:

moving the movable component of the firearm in a proximal direction relative to the frame of the firearm; and

rotating a portion of the lock assembly relative to the movable component of the firearm to transition the lock assembly into an engaged state in which the lock assembly maintains a separation distance between a distal end of a primer actuator of the firearm and a primer activation plane of the firearm, the separation distance precluding contact between the primer actuator and a cartridge primer in response to an actuation of a firing mechanism of the firearm.

15. The method of claim **14**, wherein the safety system includes a user interface operably coupled to the lock assembly, the method further comprising:

providing a user input via the user interface, following the maintaining of the separation distance, the user input causing the lock assembly to transition to a disengaged state, the movable component of the firearm being moved in a distal direction relative to the frame in response to the lock assembly being transitioned to the disengaged state; and

actuating a firing mechanism of the firearm to discharge a cartridge while the safety system remains coupled to the firearm.

16. The method of claim **15**, further comprising:

seating a cartridge in a chamber of a barrel of the firearm in response to the movement in the distal direction of the movable component following the disengagement of the lock assembly.

17. The method of claim **15**, wherein:

the lock assembly remains coupled to the firearm condition that the lock assembly is in the engaged state, on a condition that the lock assembly is in the engaged state, and on a transition therebetween.

18. The method of claim **15**, wherein:

the portion of the lock assembly rotates in response to a motive force generated by a spring on a condition that the lock assembly is transitioned to the disengaged state in response to the user input.

19. The method of claim **15**, wherein:

the lock assembly includes a motor operably coupled to an energy storage device; and

the motor is rotatable in response to the user input to transition the lock assembly to the disengaged state.

20. The method of claim **19**, wherein:

the firearm is a handgun;

the movable component of the firearm is a slide of the handgun; and

following the user input to transition the lock assembly to the disengaged state, the method includes actuating a slide release of the handgun.

* * * * *