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Self-contained compact rotary steerable system

Abstract

A self-sufficient rotary steerable system configured to provide a bottom hole assembly with a build-up rate of at least 25 degrees per 100 feet of drilling distance. The rotary steerable system has a reduced length without the removal or omission of functional components, including a power module, a control module, a communication module, a filter module, a valve module, and/or a pressure regulation module. The build-up rate is defined as a function of a length between a first contact point on a drill bit of the bottom hole assembly and a second contact point at a piston assembly of the rotary steerable system; length between the second contact point and a third contact point at a stabilizer of the rotary steerable system; the drill bit outer diameter; the piston assembly outer diameter; and the stabilizer outer diameter.

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Background/Summary

BACKGROUND

(1) In the process of drilling and producing oil and gas wells, rotary steerable systems are used to control and adjust the direction in which a well is drilled. The rate at which a rotary steerable system changes the direction of a drill bit during drilling can be expressed as a build-up rate, which depends on the length of the rotary steerable system and other factors. Typical self-sufficient rotary steerable systems are over 150 inches in length and achieve build-up rates of less than 10 degrees per 100 feet of drilling. Prior art attempts at achieving higher build-up rates removed or omitted features from the rotary steerable system to reduce its length, thereby creating rotary steerable systems that are not self-sufficient. There is a need for a reduced-length, self-sufficient rotary steerable system and bottom hole assembly that achieves higher build-up rates.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING VIEWS

(1) FIG. **1** is a side view of a rotary steerable system of the present invention.
(2) FIG. **2** is a sectional view of the rotary steerable system.
(3) FIG. **3** is a sectional view of a control sleeve and a steering section of the rotary steerable system.
(4) FIG. **4** is a partially exploded view of a control insert configured to fit within the control sleeve.
(5) FIG. **5** is a partial sectional view of an upper control unit of the control insert within the control sleeve.
(6) FIG. **6** is an exploded view of a lower control unit of the control insert.
(7) FIG. **7** is a sectional view of the lower control unit of the control insert.
(8) FIG. **8** is a sectional view of the steering section.
(9) FIG. **9** is a sectional view of the steering section taken along a perpendicular plane as compared to FIG. **8**.
(10) FIG. **10** is a sectional view of a lower portion of the control section and the steering section.
(11) FIG. **11** is a top view of a valve stator of the rotary steerable system.
(12) FIG. **12** is a sectional view of the valve stator of the rotary steerable system taken along line **12-12** in FIG. **11**.
(13) FIG. **13** is a bottom view of the valve stator of the rotary steerable system.
(14) FIG. **14** is a top view of an alternate embodiment of the valve stator of the rotary steerable system.
(15) FIG. **15** is a sectional view of the alternate embodiment of the valve stator of the rotary steerable system taken along line **15-15** in FIG. **14**.
(16) FIG. **16** is a bottom view of the alternate embodiment of the valve stator of the rotary steerable system.
(17) FIG. **17** is a top view of a valve rotor of the rotary steerable system.
(18) FIG. **18** is a sectional view of the valve rotor of the rotary steerable system taken along line **18-18** in FIG. **17**.
(19) FIG. **19** is a bottom view of the valve rotor of the rotary steerable system.
(20) FIG. **20** is a top view of the valve assembly including the valve rotor and the valve stator, with the valve rotor in a first position.
(21) FIG. **21** is a sectional view of the valve assembly with the valve rotor in the first position taken along line **21-21** in FIG. **20**.
(22) FIG. **22** is a top view of the valve assembly with the valve rotor in a second position.
(23) FIGS. **23**A-**23**L are schematic views of the valve assembly with the valve rotor in a sequence of positions as it rotates relative to the valve stator.
(24) FIG. **24** is a side view of the steering section in a default position.

(25) FIG. **25** is a sectional view of the steering section in the default position, taken along line **25-25** in FIG. **24**.
(26) FIG. **26** is a side view of the steering section in a first extended position.
(27) FIG. **27** is a sectional view of the steering section in the first extended position, taken along line **27-27** in FIG. **26**.
(28) FIG. **28** is a side view of the steering section in a neutral position.
(29) FIG. **29** is a sectional view of the steering section in the neutral position, taken along line **29-29** in FIG. **28**.
(30) FIG. **30** is a side view of the steering section in a second extended position.
(31) FIG. **31** is a sectional view of the steering section in the second extended position, taken along line **31-31** in FIG. **30**.
(32) FIG. **32** is a side view of an alternate embodiment of the steering section.
(33) FIG. **33** is a sectional view of the alternate embodiment of the steering section.
(34) FIG. **34** is a sectional view of the alternate embodiment of the steering section taken along line **34-34** in FIG. **32**.
(35) FIG. **35** is a sectional view of the alternate embodiment of the steering section taken along line **35-35** in FIG. **32**.
(36) FIG. **36** is a side view of the rotary steerable system connected between a flex shaft and a drill bit.
(37) FIG. **37** is another side view of the rotary steerable system connected between the flex shaft and the drill bit.
(38) FIG. **38** is a schematic representation of a build-up rate of the rotary steerable system.
(39) FIG. **39** is another side view of the rotary steerable system connected to the drill bit.
(40) FIG. **40** is a schematic sectional view of modules of the rotary steerable system connected between the drill bit and the flex shaft.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED EMBODIMENTS

(41) Disclosed herein is a rotary steerable system including a steering section. The steering section includes at least one piston. In some embodiments, the steering section includes only two pistons in each transverse cross-sectional plane. A center point of a first piston is separated from a center point of a second piston by an angle greater than 120 degrees.
(42) The rotary steerable system also includes a valve assembly configured to direct a portion of a drilling fluid flowing through the rotary steerable system into a distribution flow passage, thereby activating one of the pistons and causing the piston to extend in a radially outward direction. A ratio of the diameter of each distribution flow passage to the steering section diameter is at least 0.07. The distribution flow passages are contained within a central area of the steering section. A ratio of the diameter of the central area to the steering section diameter is 0.5 or less. An activation duration of each set of pistons is about 180 degrees of rotation of a valve rotor. A ratio of the stroke length of each piston to the diameter of the steering section is greater than 0.06. As used herein, “diameter of the steering section” and “steering section diameter” both mean the minimum outer diameter of any portion of the assembled steering section (i.e., the outer diameter of the smallest portion of the assembled steering section). For example, in some embodiments, the steering section diameter may be the outer diameter of steering housing **22**.
(43) In some embodiments, the rotary steerable system also includes a control section. A combined length of the control section and the steering section is below 150 inches, preferably below 80 inches.
(44) FIGS. **1-37** illustrate embodiments of the rotary steerable system disclosed herein, with many other embodiments within the scope of the claims being readily apparent to skilled artisans after reviewing this disclosure.
(45) With reference to FIGS. **1-3**, rotary steerable system **10** includes control section **12** and steering section **14**, each having a generally cylindrical shape. Control section **12** includes

electronic components, sensors, and actuators for determining a drilling direction or tool face required and for orienting the steering section.

(46) Control section **12** includes control sleeve **16** and control insert **18** disposed within inner bore **20** of control sleeve **16**. Control insert **18** is configured for rotation relative to control sleeve **16**. In one embodiment, control insert **18** is configured to remain stationary with respect to a surrounding subterranean formation, such that control sleeve **16** rotates around control insert **18**. In other words, control insert **18** may be configured to remain geo-stationary. A lower end of control sleeve **16** is secured to an upper end of steering housing **22** of steering section **14**. In this way, control sleeve **16** is rotationally secured to steering housing **22**. As used herein, “rotationally secured” means secured together such that two components rotate together (i.e., there is no relative rotation between two components under normal operating conditions).

(47) A lower end of control insert **18** includes a valve rotor **24**, which cooperates with valve stator **26** secured to steering housing **22**. Valve rotor **24** rotates relative to valve stator **26** as control insert **18** rotates relative to control sleeve **16** and steering housing **22**.

(48) Referring now to FIGS. **2** and **4-6**, control insert **18** may include upper control unit **28**, electronics unit **30**, and lower control unit **32**. Control insert **18** may also include guide **34** secured to upper control unit **28** and guide **36** secured to lower control unit **32**. Guide **34** and **36** may be rotationally secured to control sleeve **16**, while upper and lower control units **28** and **32** rotate within guides **34** and **36**, respectively. Control insert **18** may further include upper impeller **38** rotationally secured to upper control unit **28** and lower impeller **40** rotationally secured to lower control unit **32**. Upper and lower impellers **38** and **40** may be sized and configured such that the outer ends of impellers **38** and **40** are in close proximity a surface of inner bore **20** of control sleeve **16**. Guides **34** and **36** and impellers **38** and **40** may stabilize a position of control insert **18** within inner bore **20** of control sleeve **16** while control insert **18** therein.

(49) Referring again to FIG. **2**, upper control unit **28** may include a magnetic brake **41**, which functions as an actuator to apply rotational torque in a direction that is opposite to a rotational direction of control sleeve **16** and steering housing **22**. In this way, the magnetic brake assembly adjusts the rotation rate of control insert **18** relative to control sleeve **16**. As a drilling fluid flows through inner bore **20** of control sleeve **16**, the drilling fluid flows through spaces in impeller **38**, thereby applying a rotational force on impeller **38** and upper control unit **28**. In one embodiment, upper control unit **28** also includes a power generation mechanism. The magnetic brake assembly may be the only actuator in rotary steerable system **10**.

(50) With reference to FIGS. **4** and **5**, upper control unit **28** may also include upper filter **44**. In one embodiment, upper filter **44** may be formed of rings with shoulders such that the stacking of the rings creates small interstices that function to filter. As drilling fluid flow through inner bore **20** of control sleeve **16**, a small amount of drilling fluid may flow through upper filter **44** and through intermediate spaces **43***a*, **43***b*, **43***c*, and **43***d* surrounding antenna **42** and magnetic brake **41**. Upper filter **44** removes larger particles from the drilling fluid to allow a small amount of clean fluid to flow in the intermediate spaces **43***a*-**43***d*. Allowing only clean fluid to flow in intermediate spaces **43***a*-**43***d* prevents the two parts of upper control unit **28** from seizing up and/or from creating additional drag between the two parts of upper control unit **28**. The majority of the drilling fluid flows around the exterior surface of filter **44** and through the spaces in impeller **38**.

(51) Electronics unit **30** may include sensors. For example, electronics unit **30** may include a magnetometer for sensing a north-south direction, an accelerometer for sensing inclination, and a gyrometer for sensing rotation of the control unit relative to a surrounding subterranean formation. Control insert **18** may be configured to adjust the magnetic brake assembly in the upper control unit **28** based on measurements taken by the sensors in electronics unit **30**. In some embodiments, the rotary steerable system **10** includes no batteries and only a small amount of memory (e.g., flash memory only). In these embodiments, the electronics unit **30** may include antenna **42** for transmitting measurement data and other data to a measurement-while-drilling (“MWD”) unit

secured above the rotary steerable system **10**, and the MWD unit may store the received data in a memory. Antenna **42** of the electronics unit **30** may be formed of an electromagnetic antenna.

(52) With reference to FIGS. **6** and **7**, lower control unit **32** may include housing **45** with flow passages **46**. Flow passages **46** are configured to allow a drilling fluid in an annular space between control sleeve **16** and housing **45** to flow into inner space **48** within housing **45**. Lower control unit **32** may also include lower filter **49** configured to surround and cover flow passages **46** in order to filter drilling fluid as it flows through flow passages **46** and enters inner space **48**. In one embodiment, lower filter **49** may be formed of rings with shoulders such that the stacking of the rings creates small interstices that function to filter. Lower control unit **32** may further include spring **50** disposed within inner space **48** and configured to bias valve rotor **24** in a direction toward the valve stator **26** and steering section **14**. For example, an upper end of spring **50** may engage transverse surface **52** of housing **45**, while lower end of spring **50** engages an upper end of spacer **54** to apply a downward force on the valve rotor **24**, which is secured to a lower end of spacer **54**. As a drilling fluid flows through the annular space between control sleeve **16** and housing **45**, a portion of the drilling fluid may flow through flow passages **46**, into inner space **48**, and through a rotor port **56** of valve rotor **24**. The remainder of the drilling fluid flowing through the annular space may flow through spaces in impeller **40** outside of housing **45**.

(53) With reference now to FIGS. **8** and **9**, steering section **14** includes parallel main flow passages and distribution flow passages. Steering housing **22** includes two main flow passages **66** extending from upper inner bore **68** to lower inner bore **70**. Steering housing **22** also includes two distribution flow passages **72**, each extending from a stator port **73** of valve stator **26** to one or more feed channels **74**. Steering section **14** also includes two piston assemblies **76**, each at least partially secured within a receptacle **78** in an outer surface of steering housing **22**. Each piston assembly **76** includes one or more pistons **80** each disposed within a piston sleeve **85**, all disposed within piston clamp **81**, which is configured to be secured within piston receptacle **82** in steering housing **22**. Pistons **80** are configured to slide in a radial direction within piston receptacles **82**. Each feed channel **74** extends from a distribution flow passage **72** to a piston receptacle **82**. Steering section **14** of rotary steerable system **10** may include not more than two pistons in each transverse cross-sectional plane, with the center points of the pistons separated by an angle greater than 120 degrees. Steering section **14** may include not more than two sets of pistons.

(54) Steering section **14** may further include spacers **84**, each at least partially disposed within spacer receptacles **86** in an outer surface of steering housing **22**. In one embodiment, spacers **84** are secured to steering housing **22** using bolts or screws. As used herein, “piston” means any structure configured to extend, when activated, in a radial direction from a tool to which it is secured or in which it is incorporated. For example, “piston” includes a pad, a wedge arrangement, and a cam arrangement.

(55) Referring to FIG. **10**, as a drilling fluid flows through the annular space between control sleeve **16** and control insert **18**, a portion of the drilling fluid may flow through flow passages **46** and into inner space **48** of housing **45**. The drilling fluid within inner space **48** may flow through rotor port **56** of valve rotor **24** and through a stator port **73** of valve stator **26** that is aligned with rotor port **56**. As valve rotor **24** rotates relative to valve stator **26**, rotor port **56** aligns with each of the stator ports **73** in sequence over time. Accordingly, the drilling fluid flowing through rotor port **56** will flow through each of the stator ports **73** in sequence over time. Drilling fluid that flows through one of the stator ports **73** flows through the connecting distribution flow passage **72**, through each of the connected feed channels **74**, and into connected piston receptacles **82** in order to apply a force and displace piston **80** in a radial outward direction. In some embodiments, and in order to provide an exhaust path for when the piston retracts from an open position, the drilling fluid can flow through leak channels **90** between pistons **80** and piston receptacles **82**, or in another embodiment, it may leak between the piston and the guide sleeve, through diametral space between the two or through a channel formed in the sleeve or in the piston that connect piston receptacles **82** to the

wellbore. In another embodiment, the leak channels may be located through the piston body to connect piston receptacles **82** to the wellbore. In another embodiment, the leak channel may be located between the guide sleeve and the steering body.

(56) FIGS. **11-13** illustrate one embodiment of valve stator **26**, which includes two stator ports **73** positioned on opposite sides of valve stator **26**. In other words, the central point of the outer boundary of one stator port **73** is 180 degrees from the central point of the outer boundary of the second stator port **73**. In this embodiment, the shape of each stator port **73** varies across the thickness of valve stator **26**. For example, each stator port **73** may be defined by a wedge-shaped opening **92** on first side **94** of valve stator **26** and defined by a circular opening **96** on second side **98** of valve stator **26**. First side **94** is configured to engage valve rotor **24**, and second side **98** is configured to engage distribution flow passages **72**. The sides of the wedge-shaped opening **92** may be formed of straight lines, which align with side boundaries of rotor port **56** to provide sharper actuations of pistons. While the circular openings **96** are configured to align with the distribution flow passages **72**. The transition of the shape of stator ports **73** across the thickness of valve stator **26** reduces the length of transition flow lines needed between the valve assembly and the pistons **80**. In other embodiments, each stator port **73** may be defined by wedge-shaped opening **92** on first side **94** of valve stator **26** and defined by a polygon-shaped opening on second side **98** of valve stator **26**. In still other embodiments, stator ports **73** may have the same shape across the thickness of valve stator **26**.

(57) FIGS. **14-16** illustrate an alternate embodiment of valve stator **26***a*. In this embodiment, each stator port **73** is defined by a wedge-shaped opening **92***a* on first side **94***a* of valve stator **26***a*. Each stator port **73** is defined by a polygon-shaped opening **99** on second side **98***a* of valve stator **26***a*.

(58) FIGS. **17-19** illustrate one embodiment of valve rotor **24**, which includes only one rotor port **56**. In this embodiment, the shape of rotor port **56** varies across the thickness of valve rotor **24**. For example, rotor port **56** may be defined by inner boundary **102**, outer boundary **106**, and side boundaries **108** and **110** on first side **104** of valve rotor **24**. Side boundaries **108** and **110** interconnect inner and outer boundaries **102** and **106** on first side **104**. A center point of first side **104** is positioned between inner boundary **102** and outer boundary **106**. In other words, rotor port **56** includes the center point of first side **104**. Inner boundary **102** of rotor port **56** remains constant throughout the thickness of valve rotor **24**. On second side **112** of valve rotor **24**, rotor port **56** may be defined by outer boundary **106**, inner boundary **114**, and side boundaries **116** and **118**. Side boundaries **116** and **118** interconnect inner and outer boundaries **102** and **106** on second side **112**. Inner boundary **114** is positioned between outer boundary **106** and a center point of second side **112**. In other words, the center point of second side **112** is not included within rotor port **56**. Valve rotor **24** may include sloped surface **120** in the transitions between inner boundaries **102** and **114**, side boundaries **108** and **116**, and side boundaries **110** and **118**, respectively.

(59) Side boundaries **116** and **118** of first side **104** of rotor port **56** may have the same shape as the side boundaries of wedge-shaped openings **92** of stator ports **73**. For example, each of the side boundaries **116** and **118** and each of the side boundaries of wedge-shaped openings **92** may be formed of a straight line extending in a radial direction.

(60) Referring now to FIGS. **20-22**, valve assembly **124** may include valve rotor **24** and valve stator **26**, with valve rotor **24** rotating relative to valve stator **26**. In this embodiment, outer boundary **106** of rotor port **56** aligns with the outer boundary of wedge-shaped openings **92** of stator ports **73**, and inner boundary **114** of rotor port **56** aligns with the inner boundary of wedge-shaped openings **92** of stator ports **73**. In a first position shown in FIGS. **20** and **21**, rotor port **56** is aligned with all of the wedge-shaped opening **92** of a single stator port **73**. In this first position, a first stator port **73***a* is “open” and a second stator port **73***b* (not shown in this view) is “closed.” As valve rotor **24** rotates, the side boundaries **116** and **118** of rotor port **56** cross over the side boundaries of wedge-shaped openings **92** of stator ports **73**, thereby alternately opening and closing stator ports **73***a* and **73***b*. The angular separation of side boundary **116** from side boundary **118** and

the angular separation of the two side boundaries of each wedge-shaped opening **92** together define the duration for which each stator port **73** is open (i.e., activation duration of each stator port **73**). These angular separations also define whether both stator ports **73** are partially open at a single point in time, and if so, the duration for which both stator ports **73** are simultaneously partially open. In certain embodiments, the opening angle of the rotor port **56** (i.e., the angular distance between side boundaries **116** and **118** within rotor port **56**) is at least 110 degrees. As used herein, "opening angle" is the rotational distance between two radial boundaries within an opening. In some embodiments, the side boundaries of the two wedge-shaped openings **92** are separated by at least 110 degrees or between 110 degrees and 170 degrees, or any subrange therein. In certain embodiments, the side boundaries of the two wedge-shaped openings **92** are separated by at least 125 degrees. In further embodiments, the side boundaries of the two wedge-shaped openings **92** are separated by an angle between 140 degrees and 170 degrees. In a second position shown in FIG. **22**, rotor port **56** is aligned with a portion of stator port **73***a* and a portion of stator port **73***b*.
(61) FIGS. **23**A-**23**L illustrate valve assembly **124** with valve rotor **24** in various sequential positions relative to valve stator **26** over time. In this embodiment, valve rotor **24** rotates in a counter-clockwise direction. In other embodiments, valve rotor **24** rotates in a clockwise direction. In still other embodiments, valve rotor **24** is maintained in a geostationary position while valve stator **26** rotates with steering section **14** and control sleeve **16** in a clockwise direction. FIG. **23**A illustrates the first position shown in FIGS. **20** and **21**, in which rotor port **56** is aligned with first stator port **73***a* such that first stator port **73***a* is fully open and second stator port **73***b* is closed. First stator port **73***a* remains fully open through the time when side boundary **116** of rotor port **56** aligns with a side boundary of the wedge-shaped opening of first stator port **73***a*, as shown in FIG. **23**B.
(62) As shown in FIG. **23**C, further rotation of valve rotor **24** causes side boundary **116** of rotor port **56** to move across first stator port **73***a* thereby reducing the open cross-sectional area of first stator port **73***a* and reducing the fluid flow rate through first stator port **73***a*. The first stator port **73***a* is partially open and the second stator port **73***b* is closed through the time when side boundary **118** of rotor port **56** aligns with a first side boundary of the wedge-shaped opening of second stator port **73***b*, as shown in FIG. **23**C. Further rotation of valve rotor **24** causes side boundary **118** of rotor port **56** to move past the first side boundary of second stator port **73***b*, thereby placing both first and second stator ports **73***a* and **73***b* in partially open positions, as shown in FIG. **23**D. In this embodiment, the valve assembly is configured to have first and second stator ports **73***a* and **73***b* partially open simultaneously as shown in FIG. **23**D. The valve assembly remains in this simultaneous partially open position until side boundary **116** aligns with a second side boundary of first stator port **73***a* to place first stator port **73***a* in the closed position, as shown in FIG. **23**E. As valve rotor **24** rotates further and side boundary **118** of rotor port **56** moves across the second stator port **73***b*, second stator port **73***b* is further opened and the fluid flow rate through the second stator port **73***b* increases. During this time, first stator port **73***a* is closed and second stator port **73***b* is partially open.
(63) As shown in FIG. **23**F, second stator port **73***b* is placed in a fully open position when side boundary **118** of rotor port **56** aligns with a second side boundary of second stator port **73***b*. Second stator port **73***b* remains in the fully open position through the time when side boundary **116** of rotor port **56** aligns with the first side boundary of second stator port **73***b* as shown in FIG. **23**G.
(64) As shown in FIG. **23**H, further rotation of valve rotor **24** causes side boundary **116** of rotor port **56** to move across second stator port **73***b*, thereby reducing the open cross-sectional area of second stator port **73***b* and reducing the fluid flow rate therethrough. The first stator port **73***a* is closed and the second stator port **73***b* is partially open through the time when side boundary **118** of rotor port **56** aligns with the first side boundary of first stator port **73***a*, as shown in FIG. **23**H. Further rotation of valve rotor **24** causes side boundary **118** of rotor port **56** to move past the first side boundary of first stator port **73***a* to place both stator ports **73***a* and **73***b* in partially open positions, as shown in FIG. **23**I. The valve assembly remains in this simultaneous partially open

position until side boundary **116** of rotor port **56** aligns with the second side boundary of second stator port **73***b* to place second stator port **73***b* in the closed position, as shown in FIG. **23**J. As valve rotor **24** continues to rotate and side boundary **118** of rotor port **50** moves across the first stator port **73***a*, first stator port **73***a* is further opened and the fluid flow rate through the first stator port **73***a* increases. During this time, first stator port **73***a* is partially open and second stator port **73***b* is closed. As shown in FIG. **23**K, first stator port **73***a* is placed in the fully open position when side boundary **118** of rotor port **56** aligns with the second side boundary of first stator port **73***a*. FIG. **23**L again illustrates the valve assembly in the first position, in which first stator port **73***a* is fully open and second stator port **73***b* is closed. Table 1 lists the positions of the stator ports in each view of FIG. **23**.

(65) TABLE-US-00001 TABLE 1 Position of Position of First stator Second stator Figure port 73a port 73b FIG. 23A Fully open Closed FIG. 23B Fully open Closed FIG. 23C Partially open Closed FIG. 23D Partially open Partially open FIG. 23E Closed Partially open FIG. 23F Closed Fully open FIG. 23G Closed Fully open FIG. 23H Closed Partially open FIG. 23I Partially open Partially open FIG. 23J Partially open Closed FIG. 23K Fully open Closed FIG. 23L Fully open Closed

(66) The theoretical activation duration of each stator port **73***a*, **73***b* (i.e., the rotation of valve rotor **24** for which such stator port **73***a* or **73***b* is fully or partially open) may be greater than 120 degrees, preferably greater than 150 degrees, and most preferably about 180 degrees. The embodiment illustrated in FIG. **23** provides a theoretical activation duration of about 180 degrees. Second stator port **73***b* is partially or fully open from the time that side boundary **118** of rotor port **56** crosses the first side boundary of second stator port **73***b* (immediately after the position illustrated in FIG. **23**C) until the time that side boundary **116** crosses the second side boundary of second stator port **73***b* (immediately before FIG. **23**J).

(67) FIGS. **24** and **25** illustrate steering section **14** in a default position in which pistons **80** are in retracted positions. This embodiment of rotary steerable system **10** includes two pistons **80**, with the center points of the two pistons **80** separated by about 180 degrees. Because steering section **14** includes only two pistons **80** in each transverse cross-sectional plane, distribution flow passages **72***a* and **72***b* may be positioned within a central area of steering housing **22**. In some embodiments, main flow passages **66** may extend from the central area outward radially. Distribution flow passages **72***a*, **72***b* and main flow passages **66** may be positioned between piston receptacles **82**. Optionally, main flow passages **66** may also extend beyond the space between piston receptacles **82**. The position of the distribution flow passages **72***a*, **72***b* in the central area within the same transverse cross-sectional plane as pistons **80** eliminates the need for a spider to rearrange flow lines through a length of the steering unit (i.e., distribution flow passages remain in the central area from the valve assembly **124** to the feed channels **74** and pistons **80**).

(68) In certain embodiments, the central area may be defined by a circular path that includes the center of the inner boundary of each piston receptacle **82** and is centered on the center of the steering section **14**. In other embodiments, the central area may be defined by a central diameter surrounding the center of the steering section **14**. The central diameter may be in the range of 1.5 inches to 3.0 inches, preferably about 1.75 inches to about 2.5 inches, or any subrange therein. In certain embodiments, the central diameter may be about 1.75 inches in a steering unit having a diameter less than or equal to 5.25 inches, about 2 inches in a steering unit having a diameter less than or equal to 6.75 inches, and about 2.5 inches in a steering unit having a diameter less than or equal to 9 inches. A ratio of the central diameter to the steering section diameter may be 0.5 or less, 0.4 or less, preferably 0.33 or less, more preferably 0.3 or less.

(69) In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **25**, steering section **14** includes axis x and axis y intersecting at the central point of steering section **14** as shown. The central area in which distribution flow passages **72** are positioned is defined by distribution distance **130** between the central point and a line D extending from an outer most point on one of the distribution flow passages **72**. Line M is defined by the inner boundary of one of the main flow passages **66**. Line M

is spaced apart from the central point by main distance **132**. Line P is defined by the inner boundary of one of the piston receptacles **82**. Line P is spaced apart from the central point by piston distance **134**. In this embodiment, distribution distance **130** is greater than main distance **132**, and piston distance **134** is greater than distribution distance **130**. In other words, at least a portion of each main flow passage **66** is closer to the central point of the steering section than the outer boundary of the distribution flow passages **72**. Additionally, at least a portion of each main flow passage **66** is closer to the central point of the steering section than the inner boundary of the piston receptacle **82** and the position of the piston in its retracted position.

(70) The rotary steerable system disclosed herein includes distribution flow passages **72***a*, **72***b* having larger diameters and main flow passages **66** having larger diameters than in conventional rotary steerable systems. The larger diameters of these flow lines reduce the fluid flow speed, prevent a water hammer effect, reduce erosion, and reduce pressure drop in order to preserve energy. A ratio of a diameter of each distribution flow passage **72***a*, **72***b* to a diameter of steering section **14** may be at least 0.07. In certain embodiments, a diameter of each distribution flow passage **72***a*, **72***b* is about 0.35 inches in a steering section **14** having a diameter of at least 5.25 inches, about 0.5 inches in a steering section **14** having a diameter of at least 6.75 inches, and about 0.67 inches in a steering section **14** having a diameter of at least 9 inches.

(71) With reference to FIGS. **10**, **13**, and **20-23**, valve assembly **124** (shown in FIGS. **20-23**) may be positioned at the upper end of the distribution flow passages (shown in FIG. **10**) such that circular openings **96** on the second side **98** of stator ports **73** (shown in FIG. **13**) align with distribution flow passages **72**. Specifically, circular opening **96** of stator port **73***a* aligns with distribution flow passage **72***a*, and circular opening **96** of stator port **73***b* aligns with distribution flow passage **72***b*. As valve rotor **24** rotates relative to valve stator **26** (as shown in FIG. **23**), stator ports **73***a* and **73***b* circulate through fully open, partially open, and closed positions, thereby directing fluid flowing through inner space **48** within housing **45** of lower control unit **32** into first distribution flow passage **72***a*, second distribution flow passage **72***b*, or a combination thereof.

(72) FIGS. **26** and **27** illustrate steering section **14** in a first extended position when first stator port **73***a* is fully open (as shown in FIGS. **23**A and **23**B). In this position, valve assembly **124** directs the fluid within inner space **48** of lower control unit **32** into first distribution flow passage **72***a*. Specifically, the drilling fluid that has entered inner space **48** of lower control unit **32** flows through rotor port **56** of valve rotor **24**, through first stator port **73***a*, through first distribution flow passage **72***a*, through feed channels **74**, and into first piston receptacles **82***a*. The fluid flowing into first piston receptacles **82***a* applies a radial outward force on first pistons **80***a*, thereby causing first pistons **80***a* to move in a radially outward direction. In this first extended position, first pistons **80***a* may engage a wall of a wellbore being drilled through a subterranean formation in order to adjust the direction in which the wellbore is drilled further. The drilling fluid that flows through the spaces in impeller **40** flows through main flow passages **66**, thereby bypassing the piston assemblies **76**.

(73) Referring again to FIG. **27**, each piston **80***a* and **80***b* may have a length of L.sub.p and a diameter of D.sub.p. In some embodiments a ratio of each piston's length to the piston's width is between 1 and 1.4, preferably between 1.1 and 1.3, or any subrange therein. For example, each of the pistons may have a length of 2.09 inches and a diameter of 1.73 inches, resulting in a ratio of about 1.2. In another example, the pistons may have a length of 2.88 inches and a diameter of 2.43 inches, resulting in a ratio of about 1.2. In yet another example, the pistons may have a length of 3.78 inches and a diameter of 3.12 inches, resulting in a ratio of about 1.2.

(74) Additionally, each piston **80***a* and **80***b* extends a stroke length S from its default position when activated. The pistons may have a ratio of stroke length to piston diameter that is greater than 0.06, preferably greater than 0.7, or about 0.08. For example, the stroke length of the piston may be between 0.3 inches and 0.5 inches in an embodiment having a steering section diameter of at least 5.25 inches. In another example, the stroke length of the piston may be between 0.4 inches and 0.6

inches in an embodiment having a steering section diameter of at least 6.75 inches. In yet another example, the stroke length of the piston may be between 0.6 inches and 0.8 inches in an embodiment having a steering section diameter of at least 9 inches

(75) FIGS. **28** and **29** illustrate steering section **14** in a neutral position when first and second stator ports **73***a*, **73***b* are both partially open (as shown in FIGS. **23**D and **23**I). In this position, valve assembly **124** directs the fluid within inner space **48** of lower control unit **32** into both first and second distribution flow passages **72***a*, **72***b*. As the fluid flow through first stator ports **73***a* and ultimately into piston receptacles **82***a* decreases, a force exerted by a wall of a wellbore on pistons **80***a* may overcome the outward force of the fluid flow into piston receptacles **82***a*, which may force pistons **80***a* to retract in a radially inward direction into piston receptacles **82***a*. The excess fluid in receptacle **82***a* is expelled through the exhaust port. Simultaneously, the drilling fluid flowing through second stator port **73***b* flows through second distribution flow passage **72***b*, through feed channels **74**, and into piston receptacles **82***b*. The fluid flowing into piston receptacles **82***b* begins to apply a radial outward force on second pistons **80***b*, thereby causing second pistons **80***b* to begin moving in a radially outward direction.

(76) FIGS. **30** and **31** illustrate steering section **14** in a second extended position when second stator port **73***b* is fully open (as shown in FIGS. **23**F and **23**G). In this position, valve assembly **124** directs all fluid within inner space **48** of lower control unit **32** into second distribution flow passage **72***b*. As the fluid flow through second stator ports **73***b* and ultimately into piston receptacles **82***b* increases, the fluid flow applies a greater radial outward force on second pistons **80***b*, thereby causing second pistons **80***b* to fully extend in the radially outward direction. In this second extended position, second pistons **80***b* may engage the wall of the wellbore in order to adjust the drilling in an opposite direction. In all positions of the steering section **14**, the drilling fluid that flows through the spaces in impeller **40** flows through main flow passages **66**, thereby bypassing the piston assemblies **76**.

(77) The theoretical activation duration of each piston **80***a*, **80***b* (i.e., the rotation of valve rotor **24** for which each piston **80***a*, **80***b* is fully or partially extended) is equivalent to the theoretical activation duration of each stator port **73***a*, **73***b*, which is discussed above. Rotary steerable system **10** may be configured to provide a theoretical activation duration of each piston **80***a*, **80***b* that is greater than 120 degrees, preferably greater than 150 degrees, and most preferably about 180 degrees. The actual observed activation duration of each piston **80***a*, **80***b* may be less than the theoretical activation duration because of actuation timing delays. As used herein, “activation duration” means the angle of rotation of valve rotor **24** during which a specified component is activated by or receives by fluid flow. The two-piston configuration of the rotary steerable system disclosed herein may provide a greater activation duration of each piston as compared to conventional rotary steerable systems including three-piston configurations due to fewer transitions in each rotation of the valve and due to larger angular separation of the side boundaries of each stator port.

(78) Steering section **14** may include any number of pistons within the piston assemblies. In this embodiment illustrated in FIGS. **32-35**, steering section **14** includes a first piston assembly **76***a* including two pistons **80***a* and a second piston assembly **76***b* including three pistons **80***b*. In the illustrated embodiment pistons **80***a* may be staggered along the axial length of steering housing **22** relative to pistons **80***b*, as shown in FIG. **33**. In other words, the steering section **14** includes only one piston in a transverse cross-sectional plane, such as plane A-A. In other embodiments, the offset pistons are separated by a length that is equal to the steering section diameter. Alternatively, the steering section **14** may include only a one piston.

(79) Referring now to FIGS. **36** and **37**, rotary steerable system **10** may be secured downstream of flex shaft **152** and upstream of drill bit **154** in a bottom hole assembly **155**.

(80) The rotary steerable system of the present invention, which includes a steering section and a control section, is significantly shorter than conventional rotary steerable systems. The combined

length of the steering section and the control section is less than 150 inches, less than 125 inches, less than 100 inches, less than 80 inches, less than 75 inches, less than 70 inches, less than 65 inches, or any subrange therein. In one embodiment, the rotary steerable system has a minimum diameter of about 5.25 inches, and a combined length of about 63 inches. In another embodiment, the rotary steerable system has a minimum diameter of about 6.75 inches, and a combined length of about 67 inches. In still another embodiment, the rotary steerable system has a minimum diameter of about 9 inches, and a combined length of about 74 inches.

(81) Alternatively, the rotary steerable system has a length to steering section diameter ratio of less than 16, less than 14, less than 11, less than 10, less than 9, or any subrange therein. As used herein, "length to steering section diameter ratio" means a ratio of the combined length of the steering section and control section to the minimum outer diameter of the steering section or the control section (in inches). For example, but not by way of limitation, the rotary steerable system may have a diameter less than or equal to 5.25 inches, and a length to steering section diameter ratio of less than 13, less than 12, or any subrange therein. Alternatively, the rotary steerable system may have a diameter less than or equal to 6.75 inches, and a length to steering section diameter ratio of less than 11, less than 10, or any subrange therein. In other embodiments, the rotary steerable system may have a diameter less than or equal to 9 inches, and a length to steering section diameter ratio of less than 9.

(82) With reference again to FIGS. **36** and **37**, flex shaft **152** may be secured above rotary steerable system **10**, and drill bit **154** may be secured below rotary steerable system **10**. The reduced length of the rotary steerable system **10** positions flex shaft **152** closer to drill bit **154** than in conventional rotary steerable systems, thereby enabling the rotary steerable system to turn the drill bit path by a smaller radius. For example, the rotary steerable system disclosed herein may enable a maximum turn rate of 14 degrees per 100 feet. In another embodiment, the rotary steerable system disclosed herein may enable a maximum turn rate of 18 degrees per 100 feet. In yet another embodiment, the rotary steerable system disclosed herein may enable a maximum turn rate of 24 degrees per 100 feet. In effect, the reduced length rotary steerable system **10** behaves as a hybrid push-the-bit/point-the-bit system as control section **12** and steering section **14** are deflected (i.e., pushed) as one and become pointed in the desired direction. The maximum turn rate values may be affected by environmental conditions, including conditions within a wellbore or conditions of a subterranean formation.

(83) The reduced length of the rotary steerable system of the present invention is achieved due to several features. For example, lower filter **49** and valve assembly including valve rotor **24** and valve stator **26** are incorporated into a single module, as shown in FIG. **10**. In contrast, conventional rotary steerable systems include separate modules for filters and valves. Additionally, the absence of a battery reduces the length of control section **12**. Another example is the use of smaller memory components, such as micro-electromechanical systems ("MEMS"), in the control section **12**. Conventional rotary steerable systems teach away from smaller memory components in favor of larger memory components capable of storing data required for well surveys. Further, the rotary steerable system disclosed herein includes only three sensors in control section **12**, thereby reducing the length of the control section **12**. Conventional rotary steerable systems include a greater number of sensors, which require a greater length of the control section. Another example is the transition of the shape of stator ports **73** across the thickness of valve stator **26**, which reduces the length of transition flow lines needed in steering housing **22** between the valve assembly and the pistons **80**. Furthermore, the central position of distribution flow passages **72** within steering section **14** eliminates the requirement for a spider, which transposes the main flow and distribution flow lines between the valve and pistons in conventional rotary steerable systems.

(84) The reduced length of the rotary steerable system disclosed herein provides the commercial advantage of requiring less material for construction, thereby reducing costs of manufacturing and maintenance. In some embodiments, the components of the rotary steerable system disclosed herein

are more accessible from outside of the rotary steerable system, which enables users to perform certain additional maintenance tasks in any location without the need for transporting the rotary steerable system to a shop.

(85) In other embodiments, the rotary steerable system of the present invention includes only a steering section without a control section. In this embodiment, the elements of the control section may be incorporated into the steering section, positioned in adjacent devices in the drill string, eliminated, or any combination thereof.

(86) As illustrated in FIGS. **2-9**, the rotary steerable system disclosed herein, such as rotary steerable system **10**, includes nine modules, with each module comprising a unit that may be maintained, assembled, disassembled, or exchanged independently of the other modules. The modules of the rotary steerable system disclosed herein are listed in Table 2 below.

(87) TABLE-US-00002 TABLE 2 Modules Steering housing 22 of steering Pistons 80 section 14 Piston clamps 81 Spacers 84 Screw sets for spacers 84 Modules Control sleeve 16 of control Guides 34, 36 with bolts section 12 Electronics 30, lower control unit 32, and inner portions of upper control unit 28 Housing of upper control unit 28

(88) The rotary steerable system of the present invention is configured to provide a bottom hole assembly (BHA) that achieves higher build-up rates (BUR) than BHAs including conventional rotary steerable systems. The high BUR of the BHA disclosed herein is achievable largely due to the short distance between certain contact points at which the BHA may contact the wellbore during drilling operations, as well as other factors such as drill bit diameter, piston pads under-gauge, and stabilizer under-gauge. The different factors contributing to the high BUR of the present invention are discussed in detail below.

(89) BUR is a measure of the rate at which a rotary steerable system causes a BHA to turn, often expressed in degrees per 100 feet of drilling. FIG. **38** is a schematic representation of the BUR of a BHA traveling along path **156**. The BHA may include a rotary steerable system connected between a flex shaft and a drill bit. The BHA may begin at first point **156***a* with a direction of travel generally along first axis **158**. During travel along path **156**, the BHA may turn at a particular rate, thereby changing the direction of travel. The BHA's direction of travel when it reaches second point **156***b* may be along second axis **160**. The overall change in direction of travel from first axis **158** to second axis **160** during travel is represented in FIG. **38** as angle θ. BUR may thus be expressed as the angle θ in degrees between first axis **158** and second axis **160** per 100 feet of travel along path **156**. By way of example only, a BHA or a rotary steerable system with a BUR of 10 degrees per 100 feet may travel a distance of 300 feet at an angle θ of 30 degrees. In some embodiments, the BUR of a BHA or a rotary steerable system varies over a distance and a local BUR may be measured over a shorter distance.

(90) Referring back to FIGS. **36-37**, BHA **155** may include first contact point **162**, second contact point **164**, and third contact point **166**. In one embodiment, first contact point **162** may be on drill bit **154**, while second and third contact points **164** and **166** are on rotary steerable system **10**. First contact point **162** may be defined by the location of the first set of upstream cutters of drill bit **154**. At this first contact point **162**, the first upstream cutters of drill bit **152** may contact the wellbore. Second contact point **164** may be defined by the center point of piston assembly **76**. In some embodiments, second contact point **164** is a center point between the two pistons **80**. At this second contact point **164**, the two pistons **80** may contact the wellbore when in an actuated configuration and piston clamp **81** may contact the wellbore when the pistons **80** are in a retracted configuration. Third contact point **166** may be defined as the center point of stabilizer **168** of control section **12**. At this third contact point **166**, stabilizer **168** may contact the wellbore. Third contact point **166** may be disposed proximate to flex shaft **152**. The proximity of third contact point **166** and flex shaft **152** enhances the BUR achieved by BHA **155**.

(91) A first distance L.sub.1 from first contact point **162** to second contact point **164** represents the length of the BHA between the first upstream cutters of drill bit **154** and the center point between

the two pistons **80** of piston assembly **76**. A second distance L.sub.2 from second contact point **164** to third contact point **166** represents the length of the rotary steerable system from the center point between the two pistons **80** of piston assembly **76** to the center point of stabilizer **168**. Together, first distance L.sub.1 and second distance L.sub.2 are the overall distance from first contact point **162** to third contact point **166**, representing the length of the BHA between the first upstream cutters of drill bit **154** to the center point of stabilizer **168**.

(92) The first distance L.sub.1 and second distance L.sub.2 may alternatively be expressed as ratios of length to drill bit diameter D.sub.0. The drill bit diameter D.sub.0 is the diameter of drill bit **154** at the first cutter, i.e., at first contact point **162**. The drill bit diameter D.sub.0, which may be equivalent to a nominal hole diameter, may typically be 6 inches, 8.5 inches, or 12.25 inches. As one skilled in the art will understand, the drill bit diameter D.sub.0 may be any diameter sufficient for drilling a wellbore. Thus, first ratio R.sub.1 may be the ratio of distance L.sub.1 to drill bit diameter D.sub.0, while second ratio R.sub.2 may be the ratio of distance L.sub.2 to drill bit diameter D.sub.0.

(93) FIG. **39** illustrates additional details of the present invention. Pads under-gauge (PU) may be defined as the difference between drill bit diameter D.sub.0 and the outer diameter of the rotary steerable system at piston assembly **76** with pistons **80** in the retracted position. In this way, PU is the difference between drill bit diameter D.sub.0 and the outer diameter of the rotary steerable system at second contact point **164**. By way of example only, PU may be 0.25 inches to 0.5 inches or any subrange therein, preferably, 0.35 inches to 0.4 inches or any subrange therein, and more preferably, 0.375 inches. As one skilled in the art will recognize, half of PU, i.e., PU/2, is illustrated on one side of rotary steerable system **10** in FIG. **39**, with the other half extending on the opposite side of the rotary steerable system **10**. Stabilizer under-gauge (SU) may be defined as the difference between drill bit diameter D.sub.0 and the outer diameter of stabilizer **168**. In this way, SU is the difference between drill bit diameter D.sub.0 and the outer diameter of the rotary steerable system **10** at third contact point **166**. By way of example only, SU may be 0 inches to 0.25 inches or any subrange therein, preferably, 0.12 inches to 0.15 inches or any subrange therein, and more preferably, 0.125 inches. As one skilled in the art will recognize, half of SU, i.e., SU/2, is illustrated on one side of rotary steerable system **10** in FIG. **39**, with the other half extending on the opposite side of rotary steerable system **10**.

(94) The BHA's BUR may be calculated according to the following formula using the above parameters:

(95) BUR $= \frac{216,000}{D_0^2(R_1+R_2)}\left[\frac{PU}{R_1}+\frac{PU}{R_2}-\frac{SU}{R_2}\right]$

(96) TABLE-US-00003 TABLE 3 Variable Definition R.sub.1 Ratio $= \frac{L_1}{D_0}$ R.sub.2 Ratio $= \frac{L_2}{D_0}$ L.sub.1 Length from first contact point to second contact point (inches) L.sub.2 Length from second contact point to third contact point (inches) D.sub.0 Outer diameter of drill bit (inches) PU Pads under-gauge (inches) = D.sub.0 − D.sub.P SU Stabilizer under-gauge (inches) = D.sub.0 − D.sub.S D.sub.P Outer diameter of rotary steerable system at piston assembly (inches) D.sub.S Outer diameter at rotary steerable system at stabilizer (inches)

(97) By way of example only, the rotary steerable system may have a pads under-gauge PU of 0.375 inches and a stabilizer under-gauge SU of 0.125 inches. Such a rotary steerable system may have a drill bit diameter D.sub.0 of 6 inches, 8.5 inches, or 12.25 inches. Such a rotary steerable system may have a first distance L.sub.1 of 23 inches or less, 21 inches or less, 19 inches or less, 17 inches or less, 15 inches or less, 13 inches or less, or any subrange therein. Such a rotary steerable system may have a second distance L.sub.2 of 39 inches or less, 43 inches or less, 49 inches or less, 55 inches or less, 76 inches or less, 75 inches or less, or any subrange therein. The overall length of the rotary steerable system may thus be 88 inches or less, 79 inches or less, 72 inches or less, 68 inches or less, 64 inches or less, 62 inches or less, or any subrange therein. Such a rotary steerable system may have a BUR of at least 25 degrees per 100 feet of drilling distance.

(98) The above formula calculates a maximum theoretical BUR of a particular BHA. The actual BUR achieved by a BHA may also depend on other factors, such as the amount of force exerted by the pistons **80** when in the actuated configuration, the distance of the piston extension, the inclination of the wellbore, the amount of axial load on the BHA, and many others.
(99) The BHA disclosed herein is autonomous and self-sufficient. It does not require any external function from another system or tool. Even though the high BUR is achieved largely by the BHA's shorter overall length, the BHA remains a self-sufficient tool. In other words, the reduced length of the rotary steerable system and BHA is not achieved by removing or omitting certain functional components from the tool. As illustrated in FIG. **40**, the BHA **155** may include certain functional components or modules, including communication module **170**, power module **172**, control module **174**, filter module **176**, valve module **178**, steering module **180**, and pressure regulation module **182**. One embodiment of each of these modules is illustrated in FIGS. **1-35** and described above.
(100) Communication module **170** may include an antenna for transmitting measurement data and other data to an MWD unit secured above the rotary steerable system. Communication module **170** may be positioned between first contact point **162** and third contact point **166**. In alternate embodiments, communication module **170** may be positioned between second contact point **164** and third contact point **166**. In other embodiments, such as the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **40**, communication module **170** may be positioned at least partially downstream of an upstream end of stabilizer **168**. In other words, at least a portion of communication module **170** is disposed between an upstream end of stabilizer **168** and first contact point **162**.
(101) Power module **172** is configured to generate power for the rotary steerable system. Accordingly, the presence of power module **172** eliminates the need to use batteries for powering the rotary steerable system. Power module **172** may be positioned between first contact point **162** and third contact point **166**. In some embodiments, such as the embodiment depicted in FIG. **40**, power module **172** may be positioned between second contact point **164** and third contact point **166**.
(102) Control module **174** may be configured to determine the position of the rotary steerable system during drilling and may include, for example, an electronics unit having sensors such as a magnetometer for sensing a north-south direction, an accelerometer for sensing inclination, and a gyrometer for sensing rotation of the control unit relative to a surrounding subterranean formation. Control module **174** may be positioned between first contact point **162** and third contact point **166**. In some embodiments, such as the embodiment depicted in FIG. **40**, control module **174** may be positioned between second contact point **164** and third contact point **166**.
(103) Filter module **176** may be configured to filter diverted drilling fluid that will be used to actuate the pistons of the rotary steerable system. Filter module **176** may include any combination of components configured to filter solid particles from drilling fluid or other fluid. In certain embodiments, filter module **176** may include a filter formed of rings with shoulders such that the stacking of the rings creates small interstices that function to filter. In other embodiments, filter module **176** may include a cylinder including slots, such as a one-piece cylinder including axially arranged slots. Filter module **176** may be positioned between first contact point **162** and third contact point **166**. In some embodiments, such as the embodiment depicted in FIG. **40**, filter module **176** may be positioned between second contact point **164** and third contact point **166**.
(104) Valve module **178** may be configured to divert drilling fluid to actuate the pistons of the rotary steerable system and may include, for example, a valve rotor and valve stator, the position of which determine which pistons are actuated. Valve module **178** may be positioned between first contact point **162** and third contact point **166**. In some embodiments, such as the embodiment depicted in FIG. **40**, valve module **178** may be positioned between second contact point **164** and third contact point **166**.
(105) Steering unit module **180** may be configured to turn the rotary steerable system during drilling. In certain embodiments, steering unit module **180** may include pistons that may be

actuated by valve module **178**. In other embodiments, steering unit module **180** may include pads that may be actuated by valve module **178**. In still other embodiments, steering unit module **180** may include pads actuated by pistons, which are in turn actuated by valve module **178**. In one such embodiment, hinged pads may cover pistons and the pistons may push the pads open by rotating the hinged pads around a hinge axis. Steering unit module **180** may be positioned between first contact point **162** and third contact point **166**. In some embodiments, steering unit module **180** may form the second contact point **164** as illustrated in FIG. **40**.

(106) Pressure regulation module **182** may be configured to add some pressure drop to the system if necessary. Pressure regulation module **182** may include, for example, a flow restrictor. Pressure regulation module **182** may be positioned between first contact point **162** and third contact point **166**. In some embodiments, such as the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **40**, pressure regulation module **182** may be positioned between first contact point **162** and second contact point **164**. In other embodiments, pressure regulation module **182** may be positioned between second contact point **164** and third contact point **166**.

(107) As used herein, “upper” and “lower” are to be interpreted broadly to include “proximal” and “distal” such that the structures may not be positioned in a vertical arrangement. Additionally, the elements described as “upper” and “lower” may be reversed such that the structures may be configured in the opposite vertical arrangement.

(108) Except as otherwise described or illustrated, each of the components in this device has a generally cylindrical shape and may be formed of steel, another metal, or any other durable material. Portions of the rotary steerable system may be formed of a wear resistant material, such as tungsten carbide or ceramic coated steel.

(109) Each device described in this disclosure may include any combination of the described components, features, and/or functions of each of the individual device embodiments. Each method described in this disclosure may include any combination of the described steps in any order, including the absence of certain described steps and combinations of steps used in separate embodiments. Any range of numeric values disclosed herein includes any subrange therein. “Plurality” means two or more. “Above” and “below” shall each be construed to mean upstream and downstream, such that the directional orientation of the device is not limited to a vertical arrangement.

(110) While preferred embodiments have been described, it is to be understood that the embodiments are illustrative only and that the scope of the invention is to be defined solely by the appended claims when accorded a full range of equivalents, many variations and modifications naturally occurring to those skilled in the art from a review hereof.

Claims

1. A bottom hole assembly, comprising: a drill bit having a first contact point; a rotary steerable system including a steering section, a power module, and a stabilizer; wherein the steering section has a second contact point and the stabilizer has a third contact point; wherein the power module is configured to generate power for the rotary steerable system, wherein the power module is disposed between the first contact point and the third contact point; wherein the bottom hole assembly is configured to achieve a build-up-rate (BUR) of at least 25 degrees per 100 feet of drilling; wherein the BUR is defined as: BUR = $\frac{216,000}{D_0^2(R_1+R_2)}[\frac{PU}{R_1}+\frac{PU}{R_2}-\frac{SU}{R_2}]$ Where: $R_1=\frac{L_1}{D_0}$ $R_2=\frac{L_2}{D_0}$ PU = $D_0 - D_P$ SU = $D_0 - D_S$ L.sub.1=length between the first contact point and the second contact point (inches) L.sub.2=length between the second contact point and the third contact point (inches) D.sub.0=outer diameter of drill bit (inches) D.sub.P=outer diameter of rotary steerable system at piston assembly (inches) D.sub.S=outer diameter of rotary steerable system at stabilizer (inches).

2. The bottom hole assembly of claim 1, wherein L.sub.1 is less than 23 inches.
3. The bottom hole assembly of claim 2, wherein L.sub.1 is less than 21 inches.
4. The bottom hole assembly of claim 3, wherein L.sub.1 is less than 19 inches.
5. The bottom hole assembly of claim 4, wherein L.sub.1 is less than 17 inches.
6. The bottom hole assembly of claim 5, wherein L.sub.1 is less than 15 inches.
7. The bottom hole assembly of claim 6, wherein L.sub.1 is less than 13 inches.
8. A rotary steerable system, comprising: a steering section having a second contact point; a stabilizer having a third contact point; a power module configured to generate power for the rotary steerable system, wherein the power module is disposed between a downstream end of the rotary steerable system and the third contact point; and wherein the rotary steerable system is configured to be secured downstream of a flex shaft and upstream of a drill bit in a bottom hole assembly; wherein the drill bit has a first contact point; and wherein the bottom hole assembly is configured to achieve a build-up-rate (BUR) of at least 25 degrees per 100 feet of drilling; wherein the BUR is defined as: BUR = $\frac{216,000}{D_0^2(R_1+R_2)}[\frac{PU}{R_1}+\frac{PU}{R_2}-\frac{SU}{R_2}]$ Where: $R_1=\frac{L_1}{D_0}$ $R_2=\frac{L_2}{D_0}$ PU = $D_0 - D_P$ SU = $D_0 - D_S$ L.sub.1=length between the first contact point and the second contact point (inches) L.sub.2=length between the second contact point and the third contact point (inches) D.sub.0=outer diameter of drill bit (inches) D.sub.P=outer diameter of rotary steerable system at piston assembly (inches) D.sub.S=outer diameter of rotary steerable system at stabilizer (inches).