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Rotor for an electric aircraft motor and a method for manufacturing

Abstract

A rotor for a motor of an electric aircraft is provided. The rotor includes a retention band surrounding a plurality of magnets. The retention band is designed to retain the magnets in their positions and provide a way for heat to dissipate from the magnets. The retention band may also reduce eddy currents found within the rotor. A method of manufacturing a rotor with a retention band is also provided.

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Background/Summary

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

(1) The present invention generally relates to the field of aircraft. In particular, the present invention is directed to a rotor for an electric aircraft motor and a method for manufacturing.

BACKGROUND

(2) In electric multi-propulsion systems, such as electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, the propulsors are constrained by contemporary motor configurations. Design and assembly of the propulsor units include features that limit rotor configurations of electric aircrafts.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

(3) In an aspect, a rotor for an electric aircraft includes a hub comprising a lumen, which is configured to receive a rotor shaft, at least a spoke radially extending from the hub, a hoop concentric to the hub and connected to the at least a spoke, a plurality of magnets fixedly attached to an outer surface of the hoop and configured to interact with a stator to provide a rotational speed of the rotor, and a retention band surrounding the outer surface of the plurality of magnets.

(4) In another aspect, a method of manufacturing a rotor with a retention band includes attaching a plurality of magnets to an outer surface of a hoop, creating a lead-in at the top of the plurality of magnets, press fitting a retention band onto the exterior of the plurality of magnets, and cutting the retention band to form a plurality of slits.

(5) These and other aspects and features of non-limiting embodiments of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon review of the following description of specific non-limiting embodiments of the invention in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

(1) For the purpose of illustrating the invention, the drawings show aspects of one or more embodiments of the invention. However, it should be understood that the present invention is not limited to the precise arrangements and instrumentalities shown in the drawings, wherein:

(2) FIGS. 1A and 1B are illustrations showing cross-sectional views of exemplary embodiments of a rotor for an electric aircraft motor in one or more aspects of the present disclosure;

(3) FIG. 2 is an illustration of an exemplary aircraft in one or more aspects of the present disclosure;

(4) FIG. 3 is an illustration showing an exploded view of an exemplary embodiment of an electric motor in a propulsion assembly in one or more aspects of the present disclosure;

(5) FIGS. 4A and 4B is an illustration of an exemplary embodiment of a retention band; and

(6) FIG. 5 is a flow diagram of a method for manufacturing a retention band for a rotor.

(7) The drawings are not necessarily to scale and may be illustrated by phantom lines, diagrammatic representations and fragmentary views. In certain instances, details that are not necessary for an understanding of the embodiments or that render other details difficult to perceive may have been omitted.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

(8) At a high level, aspects of the present disclosure are directed to a rotor for an electric aircraft motor, such as the motor of a lift propulsor. The rotor includes a hoop having a plurality of magnets disposed on an outer surface of the hoop, where the plurality of magnets interacts with a stator, such as windings of stator, to rotate rotor relative to the motor unit. The magnets are surrounded by a retention band configured to retain the magnets around the outer surface of the hoop. The rotor configuration presented in this disclosure includes cooling capabilities and a method of manufacturing.

(9) In the following description, for the purposes of explanation, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be apparent, however, that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. As used herein, the word “exemplary” or “illustrative” means “serving as an example, instance, or illustration.”

Any implementation described herein as “exemplary” or “illustrative” is not necessarily to be construed as preferred or advantageous over other implementations. All of the implementations described below are exemplary implementations provided to enable persons skilled in the art to make or use the embodiments of the disclosure and are not intended to limit the scope of the disclosure, which is defined by the claims. Furthermore, there is no intention to be bound by any expressed or implied theory presented in the preceding technical field, background, brief summary

(10) or the following detailed description. It is also to be understood that the specific devices and processes illustrated in the attached drawings, and described in the following specification, are simply embodiments of the inventive concepts defined in the appended claims. Hence, specific dimensions and other physical characteristics relating to the embodiments disclosed herein are not to be considered as limiting, unless the claims expressly state otherwise.

(11) Referring now to FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, cross-sectional views of an exemplary embodiment of a rotor **100** of a motor of an electric aircraft are shown in accordance with one or more embodiments of the present disclosure. In one or more embodiments, motor may include a lift motor of a propulsor, as discussed further in this disclosure in FIG. **3**. In one or more embodiments, rotor **100** includes a hub **108**. Hub **108** may be a tubular structure. As used herein, a “hub” is a component that holds the propulsor. In one or more embodiments, inner surface **116** may define a lumen **120**. Lumen **120** may be a longitudinal cavity that receives a rotor shaft **164**. Shaft **164** may be disposed within lumen **120** of hub **108** so that rotor **100** may rotate and simultaneously rotate shaft **164** which in turn rotates a propulsor. As used in this disclosure, a “lumen” is a central cavity, for example a tubular or cylindrical bore.

(12) With continued reference to FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, and in one or more embodiments, hub **108** may comprise an inner hub **104** and an outer hub **152**. In one or more embodiments, outer hub **152** may be attached to a proximal end **148** of spokes **140** of rotor **100**, as discussed further below. In one or more embodiments, inner hub **104** may be secured to outer hub **152** using a locking mechanism. A locking mechanism may be configured to removably attach sprag **156** to hub **108**. A locking mechanism may include a bolted joint, dowels, key, spline, and the like. In one or more embodiments, the inner hub **104** may include a sprag **156** defining a clutch, as discussed in more detail below.

(13) With continued reference to FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, and in one or more embodiments, rotor **100** includes a sprag **156**. Sprag **156** may be disposed within inner hub **104**. For example, and without limitation, sprag **156** may be attached to an inner surface **116** of inner hub **104**. Sprag **156** may engage a rotor shaft (not shown) which allow for the rotational movement of rotor to be translated into a mechanical movement of, for example, a propulsor. Sprag **156** may include a sprag clutch. In one or more embodiments, sprag **156** may have a cage design, so that the sprags are less likely to lay down due to centrifugal force experienced when rotor is spinning. In one or more embodiments, sprag **156** may include a maximum eccentricity of 90 microns.

(14) With continued reference to FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, rotor **100** includes a hoop **126** concentrically

positioned about hub **108**. Hoop **126** may share a central axis A with hub **108**. In one or more embodiments, hoop **126** includes magnets **112**, which are positioned along an outer circumference of hoop **126** and attached to an outer surface of hoop **126**. As used herein, a “magnet” is a material or object that produces a magnetic field. As used herein, a “hoop” is a cylindrical component. In one or more embodiments, a current may flow through a plurality of windings of a stator **168** that then results in the generation of electrically-induced magnetic fields that interact with magnets **112** to rotate rotor **100** about central axis A. As used herein, a “stator” is a stationary portion of a motor. During operation, rotor **100** may rotate axially about central axis A while stator remains still; thus, rotor **100** is rotatable relative to stator.

(15) With continued reference to FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, and in one or more embodiments, magnets **112** of hoop **126** may be permanent magnets fixed to outer surface **172**. Magnets **112** may be arranged concentrically to a central axis A of rotor **100**. Thus, magnets **112** may be arranged in a ring along the outer circumference of hoop **126**, which is defined by outer surface **172** of hoop **126**. Magnets **112** may be arranged in a single ring or may be arranged in a plurality of rings along outer surface **172**. Each magnet **112** may be positioned adjacent to another magnet **112** along convex outer surface so that stator **168** is continuously interacting with a magnet to produce a rotation of rotor **100**. In one or more embodiments, hub **108** and hoop **126** may be made from various materials, such as, for example, steel. In an embodiment, rings and/or layers of rings of magnets **112** may be formed by using adhesive between each of the magnets **112**. The adhesive may include epoxy which may be heat cure, UV cure, or the like. The ring of magnets **112** may be formed by stacking layers of magnets on top of one another and using adhesive to adhere adjacent magnetic elements. The magnets **112** may be rare earth magnets, including without limitation Neodymium magnets.

(16) With continued reference to FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, and in one or more embodiments, magnets **112** may include a magnet array. In non-limiting embodiments, a magnet array may include a Halbach array. A Halbach array is a special arrangement of permanent magnets that augments the magnetic field on one side of the array while canceling the field to near zero on the other side of the array. In general, the Halbach array is achieved by having a spatially rotating pattern of magnetization where the poles of successive magnets are not necessarily aligned and differ from one to the next.

Orientations of magnetic poles may be repeated in patterns or in successive rows, columns, and arrangements. An array, for the purpose of this disclosure is a set, arrangement, or sequence of items, in this case permanent magnets. The rotating pattern of permanent magnets can be continued indefinitely and have the same effect, and may be arranged in rows, columns, or radially, in a non-limiting illustrative embodiment. One of ordinary skill in the art would appreciate that the area that the Halbach array augments the magnetic field of may be configurable or adjustable.

(17) With continued reference to FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, and in one or more embodiments, hoop **126** may include cooling features, such as, for example, an integrated radial fan **136** or an integrated axial fan **132**. A radial fan may comprise cooling fins positioned on an upper surface of hoop **126** and provide cooling to a stator when rotor **100** is rotating about central axis A. An axial fan may include fins **124** positioned along an inner surface of hoop **126** and provide cooling to motor. Radial fan and/or axial fans may increase air flow in rotor **100** and cause convection cooling. Radial and axial fans may be consistent with motor cooling fans provided in the disclosure U.S. application Ser. No. 17/515,515 titled “AN ELECTRIC AIRCRAFT LIFT MOTOR WITH AIR COOLING”, which is incorporated in this disclosure in its entirety. In one or more embodiments, hoop **126** may include various types of materials, such as for example, titanium, steel, and the like.

(18) Continuing to reference FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, and in one or more embodiments, a retention band **128** surrounds magnets **112**. Additional disclosure on retention bands and magnets are discussed in FIGS. **4** and **5**. Retention band **128** may be present around the outer surface of magnets **112**. The outer surface of magnets **112** may be the surface opposite the surface in contact with hoop **126**. Retention band **128** may be a sleeve of a solid material or an aggregation of individual materials that run along the outer surface of magnets **112**. Retention band **128** may be made from various

materials, such as stainless steel, titanium, carbon, carbon-composite, and the like. Retention band **128**, hub **108**, and/or spokes **140** may have the same or similar coefficients of thermal expansion. As a result, retention band **128**, hub **108**, and/or spokes **140** may expand or shrink at similar rates, allowing for uniform stress around the magnets **112**. A similar coefficient of thermal expansion may allow for no point forces to form between the retention band **128** and magnets **112**. As used herein, a “retention band” is a component for maintaining a position of the component it is surrounding. For example, a retention band may be configured to maintain a position of magnets **112** by providing inward forces around the magnets **112**. For example, retention band **128** may provide stability for rotor **100** and prevent magnets **112** from lifting from outer surface **172** of hoop **126** due to centrifugal forces. Retention band **128** may include slits of various shapes and patterns to provide venting for temperature management purposes. For example, slits **142** allow for air to pass through retention band **128**, allowing air to circulate through rotor **100** when rotor **100** is spinning about central axis A.

(19) Still referencing FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, retention band **128** may be configured to reduce eddy currents. As used herein, “eddy currents” are loops of electrical current induced by a changing magnetic field. In an embodiment, the rotating stator magnetic field, as discussed in FIG. **3**, may cause voltages in the stator and rotor. These voltages may cause small circulating currents to flow, which may be eddy currents. Eddy currents may serve no useful purpose in a motor and result in wasted power. A retention band **128** composed of a poor conductor, such as titanium, steel, plastics, rubber, and the like, may be used to reduce eddy currents. A poor conductor may be a material with a low conductivity. A low conductivity may be less than $3\text{E}6\text{ S/m}$ at 20° C . Additionally, the slits **142** of retention band **128** may reduce eddy currents by breakup the area that the currents may circulate in.

(20) With continued reference to FIGS. **1A** and **1B**, and in one or more embodiments, rotor **100** includes a plurality of spokes **140**, that radiate from hub **108** to connect hub **108** and hoop **126**. Spokes **140** may extend radially outward from hub **108** to hoop **126**. Spokes **140** may be positioned in various arrangement to provide structural support to rotor **100**. In one or more embodiments, spokes **140** may be made from various materials, such as steel, titanium and the like. In some embodiments, hoop **126** and spokes **140** may be separate components that may be assembled together. In other embodiments, hoop **126** and spokes **140** may be a monolithic structure. For example, in some cases spokes **140** may include a single element, such as without limitation a disc. Disc may be solid or may include holes. In one or more embodiments, a distal end **144** of each spoke may terminate at and/or be attached to hoop **126**, and a proximal end of each spoke **140** may be attached to hub **108**.

(21) Referring now to FIG. **2**, an exemplary embodiment of an electric aircraft **208** with a propulsor **204** is illustrated in accordance with one or more embodiments of the present disclosure. As used in this disclosure an “aircraft” is any vehicle that may fly by gaining support from the air. As a non-limiting example, aircraft may include airplanes, helicopters, commercial and/or recreational aircrafts, instrument flight aircrafts, drones, electric aircrafts, airliners, rotorcrafts, vertical takeoff and landing aircrafts, jets, airships, blimps, gliders, paramotors, and the like. Aircraft **208** may include an electrically powered aircraft. In embodiments, electrically powered aircraft may be an electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. Electric aircraft may be capable of rotor-based cruising flight, rotor-based takeoff, rotor-based landing, fixed-wing cruising flight, airplane-style takeoff, airplane-style landing, and/or any combination thereof. Electric aircraft may include one or more manned and/or unmanned aircrafts. Electric aircraft may include one or more all-electric short takeoff and landing (eSTOL) aircrafts. For example, and without limitation, eVTOL aircrafts may accelerate plane to a flight speed on takeoff and decelerate plane after landing. In an embodiment, and without limitation, electric aircraft may be configured with an electric propulsion assembly. Electric propulsion assembly may include any electric propulsion assembly as described in U.S. Nonprovisional application Ser. No. 16/603,225, filed on Dec. 4,

2019, and entitled “AN INTEGRATED ELECTRIC PROPULSION ASSEMBLY,” the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference.

(22) Still referencing FIG. 2, and as used in this disclosure, a vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft is an aircraft that can hover, take off, and land vertically. An eVTOL aircraft, as used in this disclosure, is an electrically powered aircraft typically using an energy source, of a plurality of energy sources to power aircraft. To optimize the power and energy necessary to propel aircraft **208**, eVTOL aircraft may be capable of rotor-based cruising flight, rotor-based takeoff, rotor-based landing, fixed-wing cruising flight, airplane-style takeoff, airplane style landing, and/or any combination thereof. Rotor-based flight, as described herein, is where the aircraft generates lift and propulsion by way of one or more powered rotors or blades coupled with an engine, such as a “quad-copter,” multi-rotor helicopter, or other vehicle that maintains its lift primarily using downward thrusting propulsors. “Fixed-wing flight”, as described herein, is where an aircraft is capable of flight using wings and/or foils that generate lift caused by the aircraft's forward airspeed and the shape of the wings and/or foils, such as airplane-style flight.

(23) Still referencing FIG. 2, and in one or more embodiments, aircraft **208** may include a motor, which may be mounted on a structural feature of an aircraft. Design of motor may enable it to be installed external to the structural member (such as a boom, nacelle, or fuselage) for easy maintenance access and to minimize accessibility requirements for the structure. This may improve structural efficiency by requiring fewer large holes in the mounting area. This design may include two main holes in the top and bottom of the mounting area to access a bearing cartridge. Further, a structural feature may include a component of aircraft **208**. For example, and without limitation structural feature may be any portion of a vehicle incorporating motor, including any vehicle as described below. As a further non-limiting example, a structural feature may include without limitation a wing, a spar, an outrigger, a fuselage, or any portion thereof; persons skilled in the art, upon reviewing the entirety of this disclosure, will be aware of many possible features that may function as at least a structural feature. At least a structural feature may be constructed of any suitable material or combination of materials, including without limitation metal such as aluminum, titanium, steel, or the like, polymer materials or composites, fiberglass, carbon fiber, wood, or any other suitable material. As a non-limiting example, at least a structural feature may be constructed from additively manufactured polymer material with a carbon fiber exterior; aluminum parts or other elements may be enclosed for structural strength, or for purposes of supporting, for instance, vibration, torque or shear stresses imposed by at least propulsor **204**. Persons skilled in the art, upon reviewing the entirety of this disclosure, will be aware of various materials, combinations of materials, and/or constructions techniques.

(24) Still referring to FIG. 2, rotor **100** may be used for a plurality of various flight components of electric aircraft **208**, such as a propulsor **204**. For the purposes of this disclosure, a “propulsor” is a component or device used to propel a craft by exerting force on a fluid medium, which may include a gaseous medium such as air or a liquid medium such as water. Propulsor may include any device or component that consumes electrical power on demand to propel an electric aircraft in a direction or other vehicle while on ground or in-flight. For example, and without limitation, propulsor may include a rotor, propeller, paddle wheel, and the like thereof. In an embodiment, propulsor may include a plurality of blades. As used in this disclosure a “blade” is a propeller that converts rotary motion from an engine or other power source into a swirling slipstream. In an embodiment, blade may convert rotary motion to push the propeller forwards or backwards. In an embodiment, propulsor may include a rotating power-driven hub, to which are attached several radial airfoil-section blades such that the whole assembly rotates about a longitudinal axis. In one or more embodiments, rotor **100** may be used in a motor of a lift propulsor, which is further described in this disclosure with reference to FIG. 3. In one or more exemplary embodiments, propulsor **204** may include a vertical propulsor or a forward propulsor. A forward propulsor may include a propulsor configured to propel aircraft **208** in a forward direction. A vertical propulsor may include

a propulsor configured to propel aircraft **208** in an upward direction. One of ordinary skill in the art would understand upward to comprise the imaginary axis protruding from the earth at a normal angle, configured to be normal to any tangent plane to a point on a sphere (i.e. skyward). In an embodiment, vertical propulsor can be a propulsor that generates a substantially downward thrust, tending to propel an aircraft in an opposite, vertical direction and provides thrust for maneuvers. Such maneuvers can include, without limitation, vertical take-off, vertical landing, hovering, and/or rotor-based flight such as “quadcopter” or similar styles of flight.

(25) Still referencing FIG. 2, and in an embodiment, propulsor **204** may include a propeller, a blade, or the like. The function of a propeller is to convert rotary motion from an engine or other power source into a swirling slipstream which pushes the propeller forwards or backwards. The propulsor may include a rotating power-driven hub, to which are attached several radial airfoil-section blades such that the whole assembly rotates about a longitudinal axis. The blade pitch of a propeller may, for example, be fixed, manually variable to a few set positions, automatically variable (e.g. a “constant-speed” type), or any combination thereof. In an exemplary embodiment, propellers for an aircraft may be designed to be fixed to their hub at an angle similar to the thread on a screw makes an angle to the shaft; this angle may be referred to as a pitch or pitch angle which will determine the speed of the forward movement as the blade rotates.

(26) Still referencing FIG. 2, and in an embodiment, a propulsor can include a thrust element which may be integrated into the propulsor. The thrust element may include, without limitation, a device using moving or rotating foils, such as one or more rotors, an airscrew or propeller, a set of airscrews or propellers such as contra-rotating propellers, a moving or flapping wing, or the like. Further, a thrust element, for example, can include without limitation a marine propeller or screw, an impeller, a turbine, a pump-jet, a paddle or paddle-based device, or the like.

(27) Still referring to FIG. 2, a propulsor may include a pusher component. As used in this disclosure a “pusher component” is a component that pushes and/or thrusts an aircraft through a medium. As a non-limiting example, pusher component may include a pusher propeller, a paddle wheel, a pusher motor, a pusher propulsor, and the like. Pusher component may be configured to produce a forward thrust. As used in this disclosure a “forward thrust” is a thrust that forces aircraft through a medium in a horizontal direction, wherein a horizontal direction is a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis. For example, forward thrust may include a force of 1145 N to force aircraft to in a horizontal direction along the longitudinal axis. As a further non-limiting example, pusher component may twist and/or rotate to pull air behind it and, at the same time, push aircraft **208** forward with an equal amount of force. In an embodiment, and without limitation, the more air forced behind aircraft, the greater the thrust force with which aircraft **208** is pushed horizontally will be. In another embodiment, and without limitation, forward thrust may force aircraft **208** through the medium of relative air. Additionally or alternatively, plurality of propulsor may include one or more puller components. As used in this disclosure a “puller component” is a component that pulls and/or tows an aircraft through a medium. As a non-limiting example, puller component may include a flight component such as a puller propeller, a puller motor, a tractor propeller, a puller propulsor, and the like. Additionally, or alternatively, puller component may include a plurality of puller flight components.

(28) Continuing to reference FIG. 2, and in one or more embodiments, propulsor **204** includes a motor **302** (shown also in FIG. 3). Motor **302** may include, without limitation, any electric motor, where an electric motor is a device that converts electrical energy into mechanical energy, for instance by causing a shaft to rotate. A motor may be driven by direct current (DC) electric power; for instance, a motor may include a brushed DC motor or the like. A motor may be driven by electric power having varying or reversing voltage levels, such as alternating current (AC) power as produced by an alternating current generator and/or inverter, or otherwise varying power, such as produced by a switching power source. A motor may include, without limitation, a brushless DC electric motor, a permanent magnet synchronous motor, a switched reluctance motor, and/or an

induction motor; persons skilled in the art, upon reviewing the entirety of this disclosure, will be aware of various alternative or additional forms and/or configurations that a motor may take or exemplify as consistent with this disclosure. In addition to inverter and/or switching power source, a circuit driving motor may include electronic speed controllers (not shown) or other components for regulating motor speed, rotation direction, torque, and the like.

(29) Referring now to FIG. 3, an embodiment of an integrated electric propulsion assembly **300** is illustrated. Integrated electric propulsion assembly **300** includes at least a stator **304**. Stator **304**, as used herein, is a stationary component of a motor and/or motor assembly. In an embodiment, stator **304** includes at least a first magnetic element **308**. As used herein, first magnetic element **308** is an element that generates a magnetic field. For example, first magnetic element **308** may include one or more magnets which may be assembled in rows along a structural casing component. Further, first magnetic element **308** may include one or more magnets having magnetic poles oriented in at least a first direction. The magnets may include at least a permanent magnet. Permanent magnets may be composed of, but are not limited to, ceramic, alnico, samarium cobalt, neodymium iron boron materials, any rare earth magnets, and the like. Further, the magnets may include an electromagnet. As used herein, an electromagnet is an electrical component that generates magnetic field via induction; the electromagnet may include a coil of electrically conducting material, through which an electric current flow to generate the magnetic field, also called a field coil of field winding. A coil may be wound around a magnetic core, which may include without limitation an iron core or other magnetic material. The core may include a plurality of steel rings insulated from one another and then laminated together; the steel rings may include slots in which the conducting wire will wrap around to form a coil. A first magnetic element **308** may act to produce or generate a magnetic field to cause other magnetic elements to rotate, as described in further detail below. Stator **304** may include a frame to house components including at least a first magnetic element **308**, as well as one or more other elements or components as described in further detail below. In an embodiment, a magnetic field can be generated by a first magnetic element **308** and can comprise a variable magnetic field. In embodiments, a variable magnetic field may be achieved by use of an inverter, a controller, or the like. In an embodiment, stator **304** may have an inner and outer cylindrical surface; a plurality of magnetic poles may extend outward from the outer cylindrical surface of the stator. In an embodiment, stator **304** may include an annular stator, wherein the stator is ring-shaped. In an embodiment, stator **304** is incorporated into a DC motor where stator **304** is fixed and functions to supply the magnetic fields where a corresponding rotor, as described in further detail below, rotates.

(30) Still referring to FIG. 3, integrated electric propulsion assembly **300** includes propulsor **204**. In embodiments, propulsor **204** can include an integrated rotor. As used herein, a rotor is a portion of an electric motor that rotates with respect to a stator of the electric motor, such as stator **304**. A propulsor, as used herein, is a component or device used to propel a craft by exerting force on a fluid medium, which may include a gaseous medium such as air or a liquid medium such as water. Propulsor **204** may be any device or component that consumes electrical power on demand to propel an aircraft or other vehicle while on ground and/or in flight. Propulsor **204** may include one or more propulsive devices. In an embodiment, propulsor **204** can include a thrust element which may be integrated into the propulsor. A thrust element may include any device or component that converts the mechanical energy of a motor, for instance in the form of rotational motion of a shaft, into thrust in a fluid medium. For example, a thrust element may include without limitation a marine propeller or screw, an impeller, a turbine, a pump-jet, a paddle or paddle-based device, or the like. As another non-limiting example, at least a propulsor may include an eight-bladed pusher propeller, such as an eight-bladed propeller mounted behind the engine to ensure the drive shaft is in compression. Persons skilled in the art, upon reviewing the entirety of this disclosure, will be aware of various devices that may be used as at least a thrust element. As used herein, a propulsive device may include, without limitation, a device using moving or rotating foils, including without

limitation one or more rotors, an airscrew or propeller, a set of airscrews or propellers such as contra-rotating propellers, a moving or flapping wing, or the like.

(31) In an embodiment, propulsor **204** may include at least a blade. As another non-limiting example, a propulsor may include an eight-bladed pusher propeller, such as an eight-bladed propeller mounted behind the engine to ensure the drive shaft is in compression. Persons skilled in the art, upon reviewing the entirety of this disclosure, will be aware of various devices that may be used as propulsor **204**. In an embodiment, when a propulsor twists and pulls air behind it, it will, at the same time, push the aircraft forward with an equal amount of force. The more air pulled behind the aircraft, the more the aircraft is pushed forward.

(32) In an embodiment, thrust element may include a helicopter rotor incorporated into propulsor **204**. A helicopter rotor, as used herein, may include one or more blade or wing elements driven in a rotary motion to drive fluid medium in a direction axial to the rotation of the blade or wing element. Its rotation is due to the interaction between the windings and magnetic fields which produces a torque around the rotor's axis. A helicopter rotor may include a plurality of blade or wing elements.

(33) Continuing to refer to FIG. **3**, propulsor **204** can include a hub **316** rotatably mounted to stator **304**. Rotatably mounted, as described herein, is functionally secured in a manner to allow rotation. Hub **316** is a structure which allows for the mechanically connected of components of the integrated rotor assembly. In an embodiment, hub **316** can be mechanically connected to propellers or blades. In an embodiment, hub **316** may be cylindrical in shape such that it may be mechanically joined to other components of the rotor assembly. Hub **316** may be constructed of any suitable material or combination of materials, including without limitation metal such as aluminum, titanium, steel, or the like, polymer materials or composites, fiberglass, carbon fiber, wood, or any other suitable material. Hub **316** may move in a rotational manner driven by interaction between stator and components in the rotor assembly. Persons skilled in the art, upon reviewing the entirety of this disclosure, will be aware of various structures that may be used as or included as hub **316**, as used and described herein.

(34) Still referring to FIG. **3**, propulsor **204** can include a second magnetic element **320**, which may include one or more further magnetic elements. Second magnetic element **320** generates a magnetic field designed to interact with first magnetic element **308**. Second magnetic element **320** may be designed with a material such that the magnetic poles of at least a second magnetic element are oriented in an opposite direction from first magnetic element **308**. In an embodiment, second magnetic element **320** may be affixed to hub **316**. Affixed, as described herein, is the attachment, fastening, connection, and the like, of one component to another component. For example, and without limitation, affixed may include bonding the second magnetic element **320** to hub **316**, such as through hardware assembly, spot welding, riveting, brazing, soldering, glue, and the like. Second magnetic element **320** may include any magnetic element suitable for use as a first magnetic element **308**. For instance, and without limitation, second magnetic element may include a permanent magnet and/or an electromagnet. Second magnetic element **320** may include magnetic poles oriented in a second direction opposite of the orientation of the poles of first magnetic element **308**. In an embodiment, electric propulsion assembly **300** includes a motor assembly incorporating stator **304** with a first magnet element **308** and second magnetic element **320**. First magnetic element **308** includes magnetic poles oriented in a first direction, and second magnetic **320** element includes a plurality of magnetic poles oriented in the opposite direction than the plurality of magnetic poles in the first magnetic element **308**.

(35) Continuing to refer to FIG. **3**, second magnetic element **320** may include a plurality of magnets attached to or integrated in hub **316**. In an embodiment, hub **316** may incorporate structural elements of the rotor assembly of the motor assembly. As a non-limiting example hub **316** may include a motor inner magnet carrier **324** and motor outer magnet carrier **328** incorporated into the hub **316** structure. In an embodiment motor inner magnet carrier **324** and motor outer

magnet carrier **328** may be cylindrical in shape. In an embodiment, motor inner magnet carrier **324** and motor outer magnet carrier **328** may be any shape that would allow for a fit with the other components of the rotor assembly. In an embodiment, hub **316** may be short and wide in shape to reduce the profile height of the rotating assembly of electric propulsion assembly **300**. Reducing the profile assembly height may have the advantage of reducing drag force on the external components. In an embodiment, hub **316** may also be cylindrical in shape so that fitment of the components in the rotor assembly are structurally rigid while leaving hub **316** free to rotate about stator **304**.

(36) In an embodiment, motor outer magnet carrier **328** may have a slightly larger diameter than motor inner magnet carrier **324**, or vice-versa. First magnetic element **308** may be a productive element, defined herein as an element that produces a varying magnetic field. Productive elements will produce magnetic field that will attract and other magnetic elements, including a receptive element. Second magnetic element may be a productive or receptive element. A receptive element will react due to the magnetic field of the first magnetic element **308**. In an embodiment, first magnetic element **308** produces a magnetic field according to magnetic poles of first magnetic element **308** oriented in a first direction. Second magnetic element **320** may produce a magnetic field with magnetic poles in the opposite direction of the first magnetic field, which may cause the first and second magnetic elements **308**, **320** to attract one another. Receptive magnetic element may be slightly larger in diameter than the productive element. Interaction of productive and receptive magnetic elements may produce torque and cause the assembly to rotate. Hub **316** and rotor assembly may both be cylindrical in shape where rotor may have a slightly smaller circumference than hub **316** to allow the joining of both structures. Coupling of hub **316** to stator **304** may be accomplished via a surface modification of either hub **316**, stator **304** or both to form a locking mechanism. Coupling may be accomplished using additional nuts, bolts, and/or other fastening apparatuses. In an embodiment, an integrated rotor assembly as described above reduces profile drag in forward flight for an electric aircraft. Profile drag may be caused by a number of external forces that the aircraft is subjected to. By incorporating a propulsor **204** into hub **316**, a profile of integrated electric propulsion assembly **300** may be reduced, resulting in a reduced profile drag, as noted above. In an embodiment, the rotor, which includes motor inner magnet carrier **324**, motor outer magnet carrier **328**, propulsor **204** is incorporated into hub **316** to become one integrated unit. In an embodiment, inner motor magnet carrier **312** rotates in response to a magnetic field. The rotation causes hub **316** to rotate. This unit can be inserted into integrated electric propulsion assembly **300** as one unit. This enables ease of installation, maintenance, and removal.

(37) Still referring to FIG. 3, stator **304** may include a through-hole **332**. Through-hole **332** may provide an opening for a component to be inserted through to aid in attaching propulsor with integrated rotor to stator. In an embodiment, through-hole **332** may have a round or cylindrical shape and be located at a rotational axis of stator **304**. Hub **316** may be mounted to stator **304** by means of a shaft **336** rotatably inserted through through hole **332**. Through-hole **332** may have a diameter that is slightly larger than a diameter of shaft **336** to allow shaft **336** to fit through through-hole **332** to connect stator **304** to hub **316**. Shaft **336** may rotate in response to rotation of propulsor **204**.

(38) Still referring to FIG. 3, integrated electric propulsion assembly **300** may include a bearing cartridge **340**. Bearing cartridge **340** may include a bore. Shaft **336** may be inserted through the bore of bearing cartridge **340**. Bearing cartridge **340** may be attached to a structural element of a vehicle. Bearing cartridge **340** functions to support the rotor and to transfer the loads from the motor. Loads may include, without limitation, weight, power, magnetic pull, pitch errors, out of balance situations, and the like. A bearing cartridge **340** may include a bore. a bearing cartridge **340** may include a smooth metal ball or roller that rolls against a smooth inner and outer metal surface. The rollers or balls take the load, allowing the device to spin. a bearing may include, without

limitation, a ball bearing, a straight roller bearing, a tapered roller bearing or the like. a bearing cartridge **340** may be subject to a load which may include, without limitation, a radial or a thrust load. Depending on the location of bearing cartridge **340** in the assembly, it may see all of a radial or thrust load or a combination of both. In an embodiment, bearing cartridge **340** may join integrated electric propulsion assembly **300** to a structure feature. A bearing cartridge **340** may function to minimize the structural impact from the transfer of bearing loads during flight and/or to increase energy efficiency and power of propulsor. a bearing cartridge **340** may include a shaft and collar arrangement, wherein a shaft affixed into a collar assembly. A bearing element may support the two joined structures by reducing transmission of vibration from such bearings. Roller (rolling-contact) bearings are conventionally used for locating and supporting machine parts such as rotors or rotating shafts. Typically, the rolling elements of a roller bearing are balls or rollers. In general, a roller bearing is a type of anti-friction bearing; a roller bearing functions to reduce friction allowing free rotation. Also, a roller bearing may act to transfer loads between rotating and stationary members. In an embodiment, bearing cartridge **340** may act to keep a propulsor **204** and components intact during flight by allowing integrated electric propulsion assembly **300** to rotate freely while resisting loads such as an axial force. In an embodiment, bearing cartridge **340** includes a roller bearing incorporated into the bore. a roller bearing is in contact with propulsor shaft **336**. Stator **304** is mechanically coupled to inverter housing **340**. Mechanically coupled may include a mechanical fastening, without limitation, such as nuts, bolts or other fastening device. Mechanically coupled may include welding or casting or the like. Inverter housing contains a bore which allows insertion by propulsor shaft **336** into bearing cartridge **340**.

(39) Still referring to FIG. **3**, electric propulsion assembly **300** may include a motor assembly (40) incorporating a rotating assembly and a stationary assembly. Hub **316**, motor inner magnet carrier **324** and propulsor shaft **336** may be incorporated into the rotor assembly of electric propulsion assembly **300** which make up rotating parts of electric motor, moving between the stator poles and transmitting the motor power. As one integrated part, the rotor assembly may be inserted and removed in one piece. Stator **304** may be incorporated into the stationary part of the motor assembly. Stator and rotor may combine to form an electric motor. In embodiment, an electric motor may, for instance, incorporate coils of wire which are driven by the magnetic force exerted by a first magnetic field on an electric current. The function of the motor may be to convert electrical energy into mechanical energy. In operation, a wire carrying current may create at least a first magnetic field with magnetic poles in a first orientation which interacts with a second magnetic field with magnetic poles oriented in the opposite direction of the first magnetic pole direction causing a force that may move a rotor in a direction. For example, and without limitation, a first magnetic element **308** in electric propulsion assembly **300** may include an active magnet. For instance, and without limitation, a second magnetic element may include a passive magnet, a magnet that reacts to a magnetic force generated by a first magnetic element **308**. In an embodiment, a first magnet positioned around the rotor assembly, may generate magnetic fields to affect the position of the rotor relative to the stator **304**. A controller **904** may have an ability to adjust electricity originating from a power supply and, thereby, the magnetic forces generated, to ensure stable rotation of the rotor, independent of the forces induced by the machinery process. Electric propulsion assembly **300** may include an impeller **344** coupled with the shaft **336**. An impeller, as described herein, is a rotor used to increase or decrease the pressure and flow of a fluid and/or air. Impeller **344** may function to provide cooling to electric propulsion assembly **300**. Impeller **344** may include varying blade configurations, such as radial blades, non-radial blades, semi-circular blades and airfoil blades. Impeller **314** may further include single and/or double-sided configurations.

(41) Now referring to FIGS. **4A** and **4B**, an embodiment of a ring **400** of magnets **112** is shown. Retention band **128** may surround magnets **112**. Retention band **128** may include slits **404**. Slits **404** may divide the original retention band **128** into a plurality of smaller retention bands (**128a-c**).

In an embodiment, slits **404** may be larger than the retention band **128a-c** itself. This is because it may be desirable to make retention band **128** as small as possible, to allow for cooling of the motor, but while still decreasing eddy currents. In an embodiment, a retention band **128** may be segmented by slits **404** into three smaller retention bands **128a-c**. Spacing and number of slits **404** may be determined as a function of the spacing of magnets **112** and/or the size of rotor **100** (not shown). Slits **404** may be circular and circumferential to the retention band **128**. In an embodiment, retention band **128** may be placed on magnets **112**, as shown in FIG. **4B**. In another embodiment, retention band **128** may be placed in between each layer of magnets **112**, as shown in FIG. **4A**. Magnets **112** may form a ring. Magnets **112** may also be stacked vertically. There may be many segments of 408 magnets **112**. Each segment of magnets may be connected by a dielectric. As used herein, a “dielectric” is an electrical insulator. Dielectric may be any electrically insulative adhesive as discussed in FIG. **1**.

(42) Still referring to FIGS. **4A** and **4B**, there may be a plurality of retention bands **128**. For example, there may be two retention bands **128** on magnets **112**. Each retention band **128** may be segmented into three smaller retention bands **128a-c**, such that there are 6 smaller retention bands on magnets **112**. Additionally, there may be more than one rotor **100** (not shown) in an aircraft **208** (not shown). Specifically, each propulsor **204** (not shown) may include two motors. As such, there may be one or more retention bands **128** on magnets **112** of a rotor of each motor.

(43) Still referencing FIGS. **4A** and **4B**, top row **408** of magnets **112** may include a lead-in **416**. A lead-in may be a chamfer or a fillet. Lead-in may be used to press fit retention band **128** over the magnets **112**. Retention band **128** may be pressed onto magnets **112** using uniform pressure as to not create any point forces.

(44) Now referring to FIG. **5**, a method **500** of manufacturing a rotor with a retention band. Step **505** of method **500** includes attaching a plurality of magnets to an outer surface of a hoop of a rotor. Attaching a plurality of magnets may further include using an adhesive and/or a dielectric. Multiple layers of magnets may be attached to each other by way of an adhesive. There may be a plurality of rings of magnets surrounding the hoop. Rings of magnets may be stacked vertically and/or outward from the hoop. This step may be implemented without limitation as described in FIGS. **1-4**.

(45) Step **510** of method **500** includes creating a lead-in at the top of the plurality of magnets. In an embodiment, a lead-in may include a chamfer and/or a fillet. Lead in may be created using a lathe to trim an angle at the top of the magnets. Lead in may also be created using other machining methods such as a mill, saw, or the like. Lead-in may be used to press fit the retention band onto the magnets. This step may be implemented without limitation as described in FIGS. **1-4**.

(46) Step **515** of method **500** includes press fitting a retention band onto the exterior of the plurality of magnets. A press fitting may be created by applying a uniform pressure on the plurality of magnets. This way, there may be no or minimal point forces on the magnets. Retention band may be used to maintain a position of the magnets. Retention band may be composed of titanium. Retention band and magnets may be selected to have similar coefficients of thermal expansion. This step may be implemented without limitation as described in FIGS. **1-4**.

(47) Step **520** of method **500** includes cutting the retention band to form a plurality of slits. A lathe may be used to cut the retention band. Cutting the retention band may include cutting the retention band into sections. For example, there may be three sections, six sections, or the like. The retention band may be used to dissipate heat from the magnets. Slits may be cut using a lathe, mill, saw, or the like. In an embodiment, slits may be cut using a key slot cutter. The slits may be located between the layers of magnets. This step may be implemented without limitation as described in FIGS. **1-4**.

(48) The foregoing has been a detailed description of illustrative embodiments of the invention. Various modifications and additions can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of this invention. Features of each of the various embodiments described above may be combined with features of other described embodiments as appropriate in order to provide a multiplicity of

feature combinations in associated new embodiments. Furthermore, while the foregoing describes a number of separate embodiments, what has been described herein is merely illustrative of the application of the principles of the present invention. Additionally, although particular methods herein may be illustrated and/or described as being performed in a specific order, the ordering is highly variable within ordinary skill to achieve embodiments according to this disclosure. Accordingly, this description is meant to be taken only by way of example, and not to otherwise limit the scope of this invention.

(49) Exemplary embodiments have been disclosed above and illustrated in the accompanying drawings. It will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes, omissions and additions may be made to that which is specifically disclosed herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Claims

1. A rotor of an electric propulsion assembly, the rotor comprising: a hub; a hoop coupled to and concentrically arranged with respect to the hub; at least one spoke extending between the hub and the hoop; a plurality of magnets fixedly attached to an outer circumferential surface of the hoop; and a retention band structure surrounding the plurality of magnets, the retention band structure including: a metallic sleeve portion; and at least one slit extending circumferentially around the metallic sleeve portion to define at least two separate metallic retention bands positioned on an outermost surface of the plurality of magnets, wherein the at least one slit formed between the at least two separate metallic retention bands is configured to inhibit propagation of eddy currents in the metallic sleeve portion, wherein coefficients of thermal expansion of the at least two separate metallic retention bands and the at least one spoke are substantially the same.
2. The rotor of claim 1, wherein the retention band structure is configured to maintain a position of the plurality of magnets.
3. The rotor of claim 1, wherein the retention band structure is configured to dissipate heat from the plurality of magnets.
4. The rotor of claim 1, wherein the retention band structure comprises a titanium material.
5. The rotor of claim 1, wherein coefficients of thermal expansion of the retention band structure, the hoop, the hub, and the at least one spoke extending between the hub and the hoop are substantially the same, and provide for substantially uniform thermal expansion of the retention band structure, the hoop, the hub, and the at least one spoke.
6. The rotor of claim 5, wherein the coefficients of thermal expansion of the retention band structure, the hoop, the hub, and the at least one spoke provide for substantially uniform thermal expansion of the retention band structure, the hoop, the hub, and the at least one spoke at substantially the same operating temperatures.
7. The rotor of claim 1, wherein the plurality of magnets is arranged in a Halbach array.
8. The rotor of claim 1, further comprising an adhesive fixedly attaching the plurality of magnets to the hoop and to each other.
9. The rotor of claim 1, wherein the at least one slit includes a plurality of slits extending circumferentially around the metallic sleeve portion to form a plurality of separate retention bands positioned on a radially outmost surface of the plurality of magnets.
10. The rotor of claim 9, wherein each of the plurality of slits is positioned between adjacent circumferential rows of magnets of the plurality of magnets.
11. The rotor of claim 1, further comprising at least one of: a radial fan including a plurality of radial cooling fins arranged on an axial end portion of the hoop; or an axial fan including a plurality of axial cooling fins arranged on an inner circumferential surface of the hoop.
12. The rotor of claim 11, wherein the radial fan is integrally formed at the axial end portion of the hoop, and the axial fan is integrally formed on the inner circumferential surface of the hoop.

13. The rotor of claim 1, wherein the hub defines a lumen configured to receive a rotor shaft, and the plurality of magnets are configured to interact with a stator to provide for rotation of the rotor and the rotor shaft coupled in the lumen.

14. The rotor of claim 1, wherein the rotor is configured to be positioned within a stator of the electric propulsion assembly, wherein a radially outermost surface of the metallic sleeve portion is spaced apart from windings of the stator so as to form a gap between the rotor and the stator of the electric propulsion assembly.

15. A method of manufacturing a rotor of an electric propulsion assembly, the method comprising: attaching a plurality of magnets to an outer surface of a hoop; press fitting a metallic sleeve portion of a retention band structure onto an outermost surface of the plurality of magnets; and forming at least one slit extending circumferentially around the metallic sleeve portion press fit onto the outermost surface of the plurality of magnets to thereby form at least two separate metallic retention bands from the metallic sleeve portion positioned on the outermost surface of the plurality of magnets, the at least one slit formed between the at least two separate metallic retention bands being configured to inhibit propagation of eddy currents in the metallic sleeve portion, wherein coefficients of thermal expansion of the at least two separate metallic retention bands and at least one spoke extending between a hub of the rotor and the hoop are substantially the same.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein attaching the plurality of magnets includes attaching the plurality of magnets to the outer surface of the hoop with an adhesive.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein forming the at least one slit includes milling the metallic sleeve portion to cut the at least one slit and form the at least two separate metallic retention bands from the metallic sleeve portion of the retention band structure.

18. The method of claim 15, further comprising forming a lead-in at an end portion of the plurality of magnets to guide a placement of the retention band structure onto the outer surface of the plurality of magnets.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein creating the lead-in includes forming a chamfer at a leading corner portion of the plurality of magnets.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein forming the at least one slit includes forming a plurality of slits extending circumferentially around the metallic sleeve portion of the retention band structure to form a plurality of separate retention bands positioned on a radially outermost surface of the plurality of magnets.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein forming the plurality of slits includes forming slits at positions on the metallic sleeve portion between adjacent circumferential rows of magnets of the plurality of magnets.

22. The method of claim 15, wherein coefficients of thermal expansion of the at least two separate metallic retention bands, the hoop, the hub, and the at least one spoke provide for substantially uniform thermal expansion of the at least two separate metallic retention bands, the hoop, the hub, and the at least one spoke at substantially the same operating temperatures.
