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Clifton et al.

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(54) **VEHICLE AND MAST MOUNTING ASSEMBLY THEREFOR**

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(75) Inventors: **Christopher Clifton**, Bloomfield, IN (US); **Dean L. Jones**, Bloomington, IN (US); **Philip S. Mitchell**, Springville, IN (US); **David Myers**, Bloomfield, IN (US); **James M. Pruett**, Montgomery, IN (US)

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(73) Assignee: **The United States of America as represented by the Secretary of the Navy**, Washington, DC (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 355 days.

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(Continued)

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Primary Examiner — Robert Canfield

Assistant Examiner — Charissa Ahmad

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Christopher A. Monsey

(51) **Int. Cl.**
E04H 12/00 (2006.01)
H01Q 1/32 (2006.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

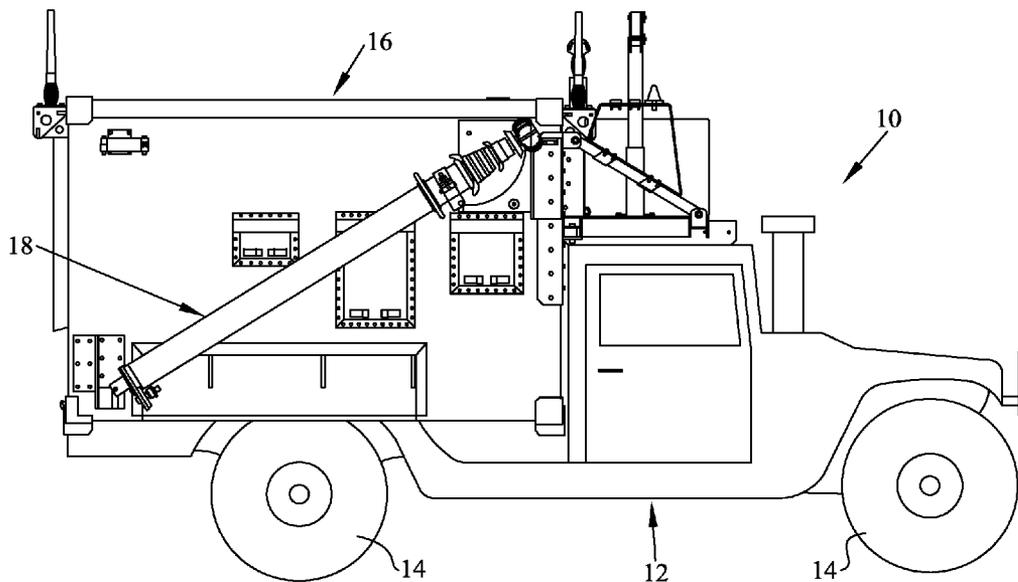
(52) **U.S. Cl.** 52/110; 52/118; 52/116; 248/540; 343/713; 343/883

A vehicle is disclosed having a mast assembly mounted to a sidewall of the vehicle. The mast is pivotally mounted and can be held in a first stowed position by way of a first clamp member. The mast is pivotal relative to the sidewall, to an essentially vertical and erect position, and held in the second position by way of a second clamp.

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 52/110, 52/111, 116-118; 248/230.1, 230.4, 539, 248/540, 157; 343/713, 882, 883, 901

See application file for complete search history.

18 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets



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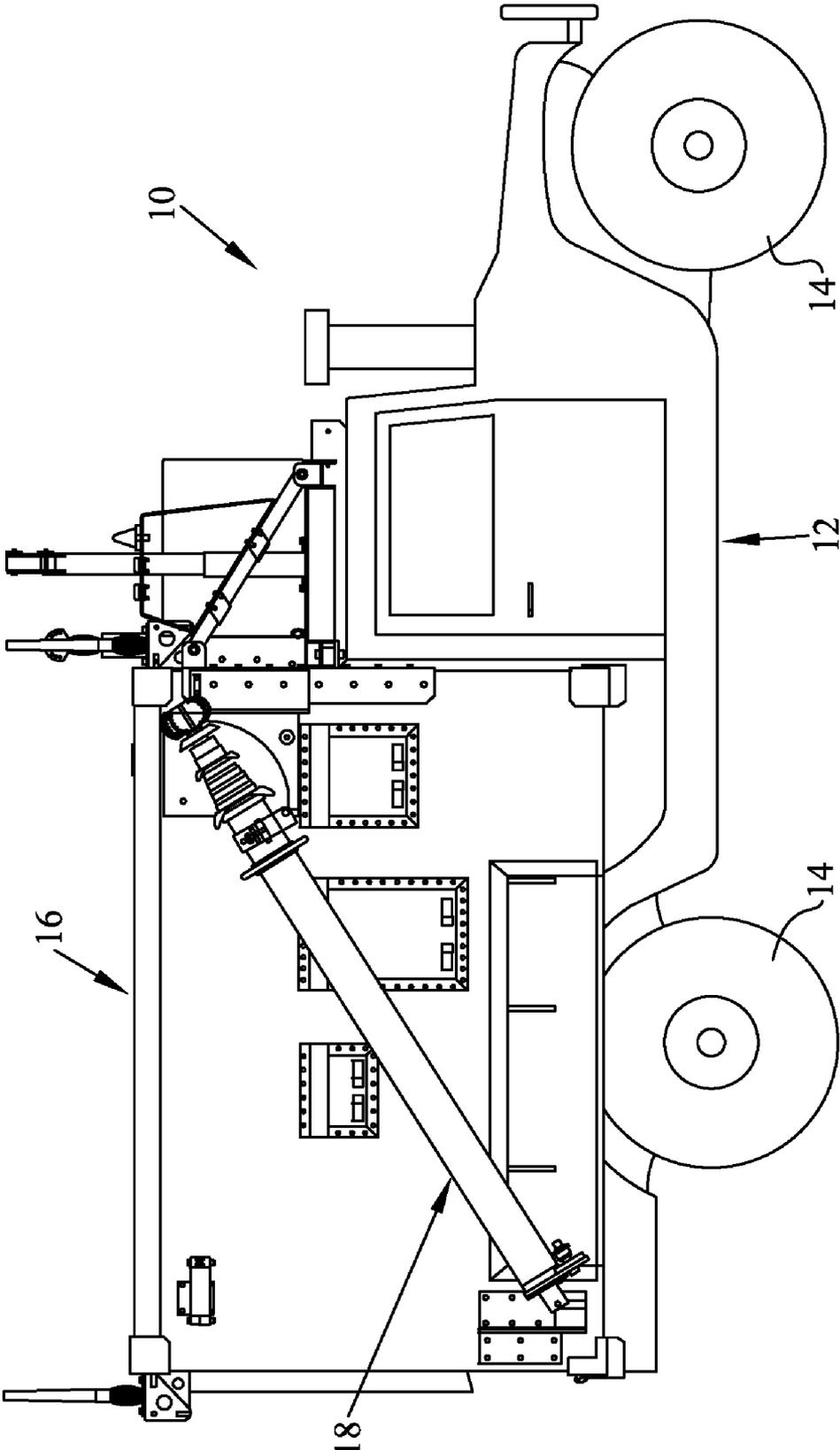


FIG. 1

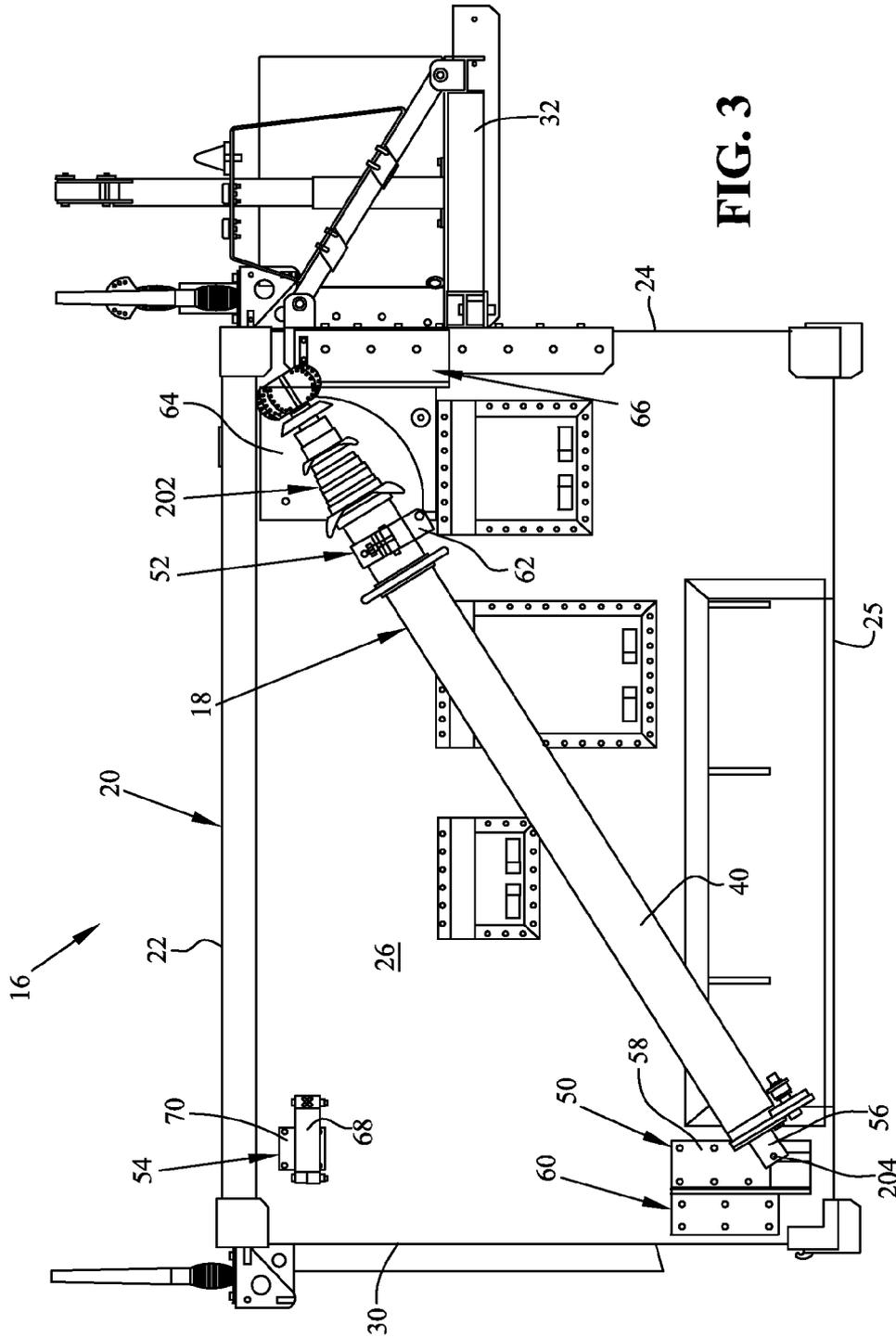


FIG. 3

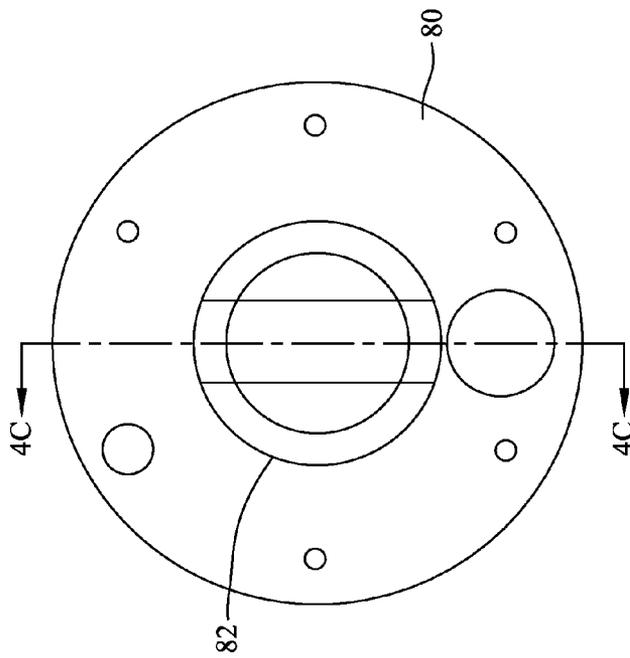


FIG. 4A

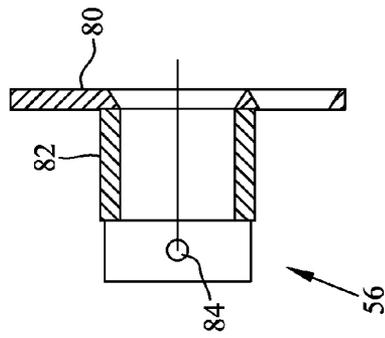


FIG. 4C

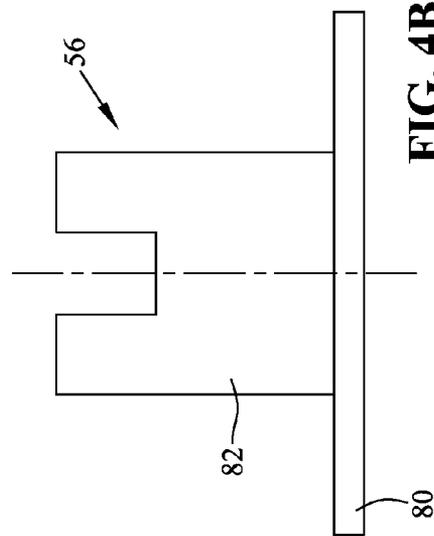


FIG. 4B

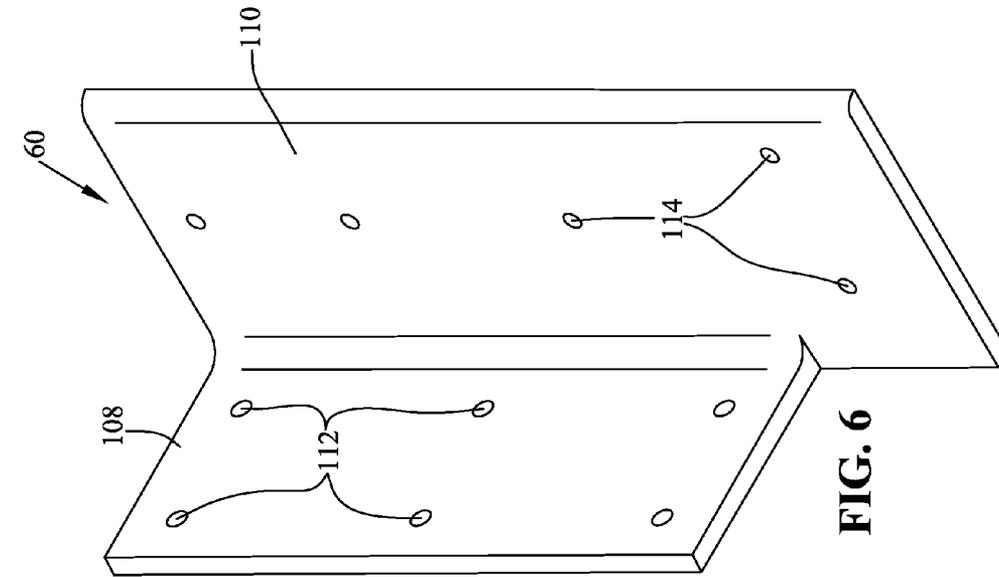


FIG. 6

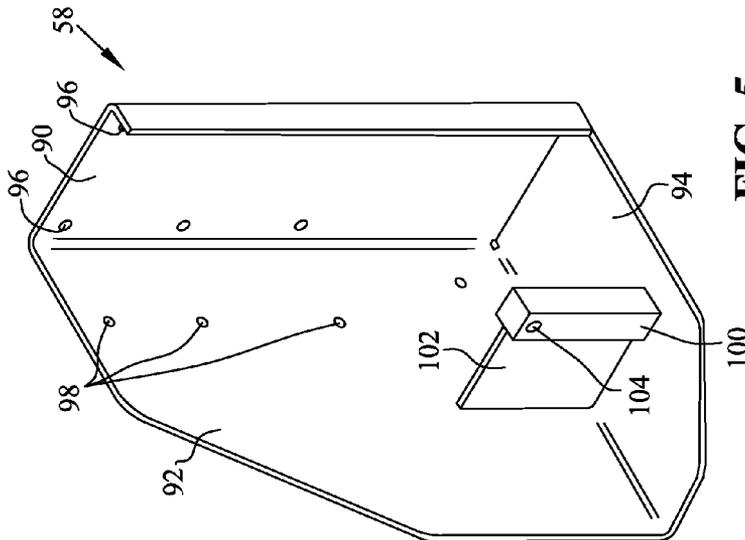


FIG. 5

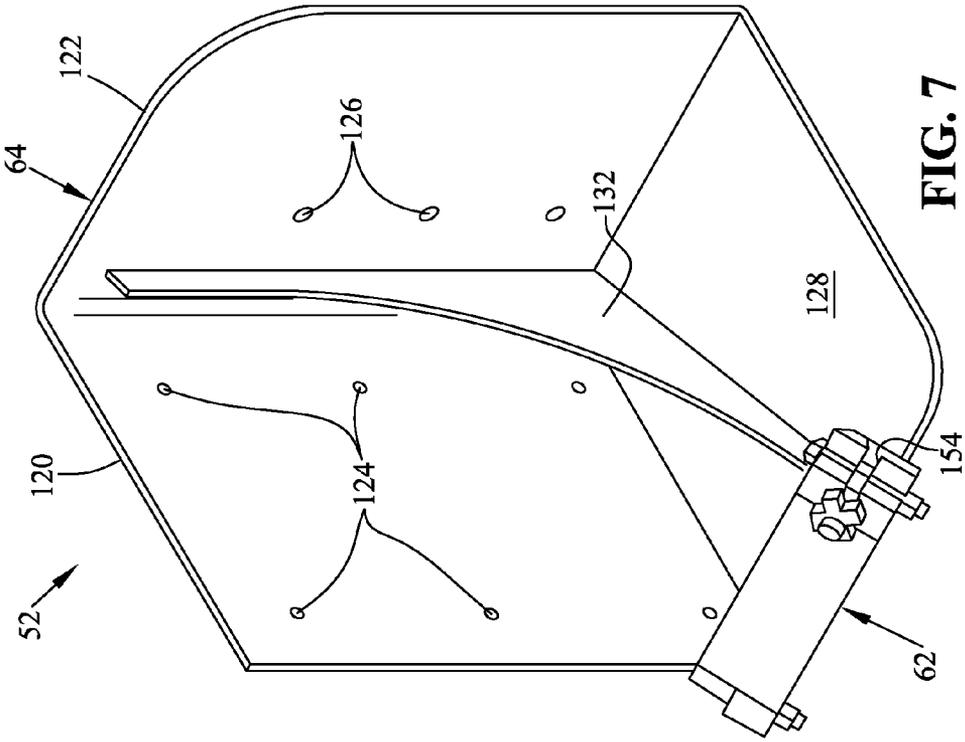


FIG. 7

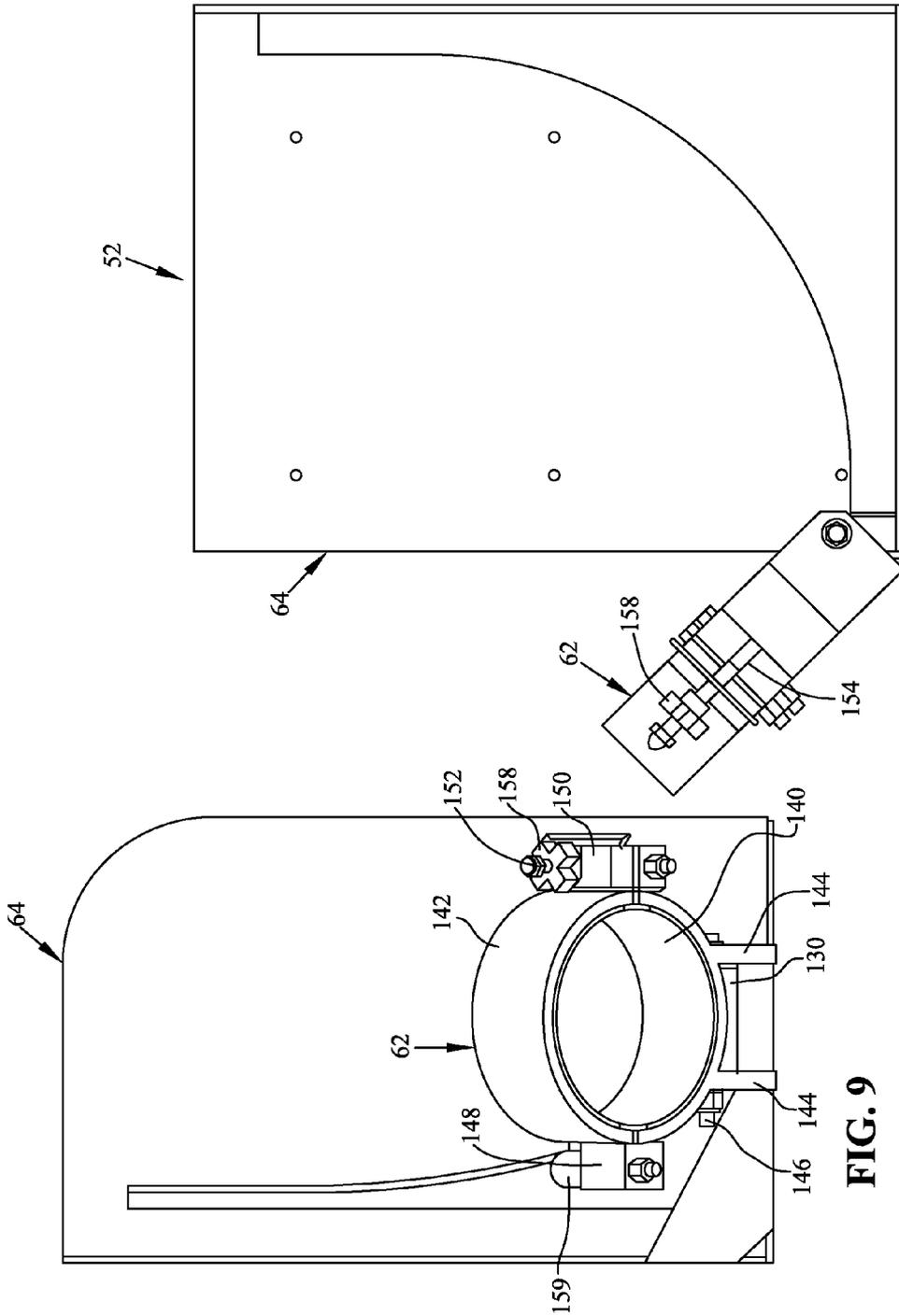


FIG. 8

FIG. 9

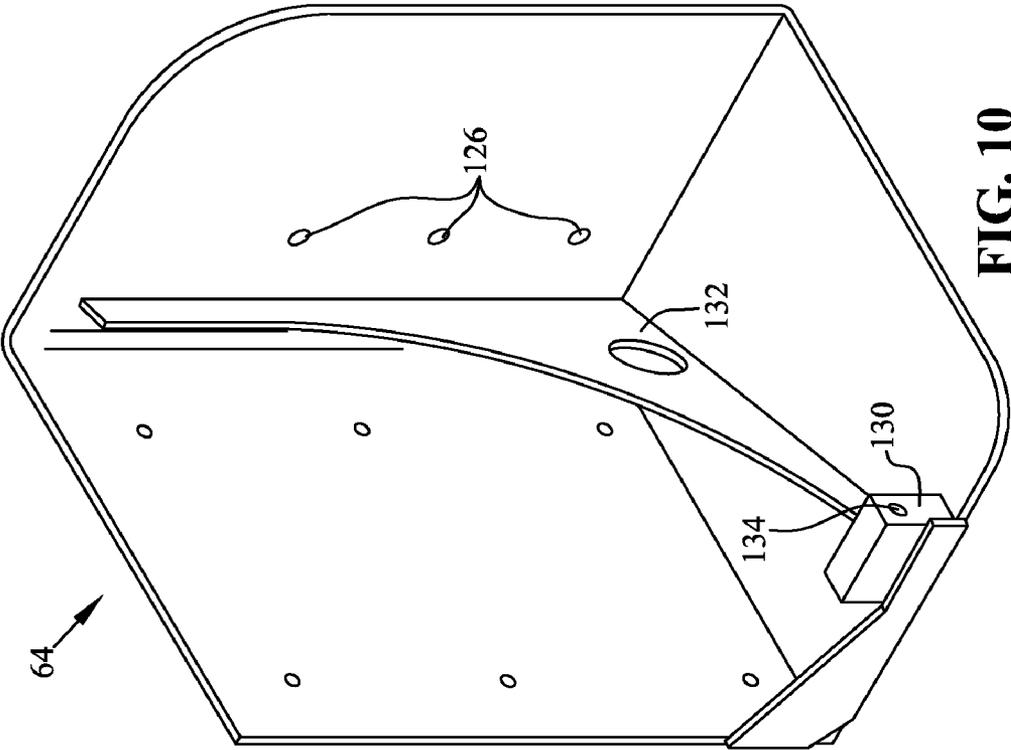


FIG. 10

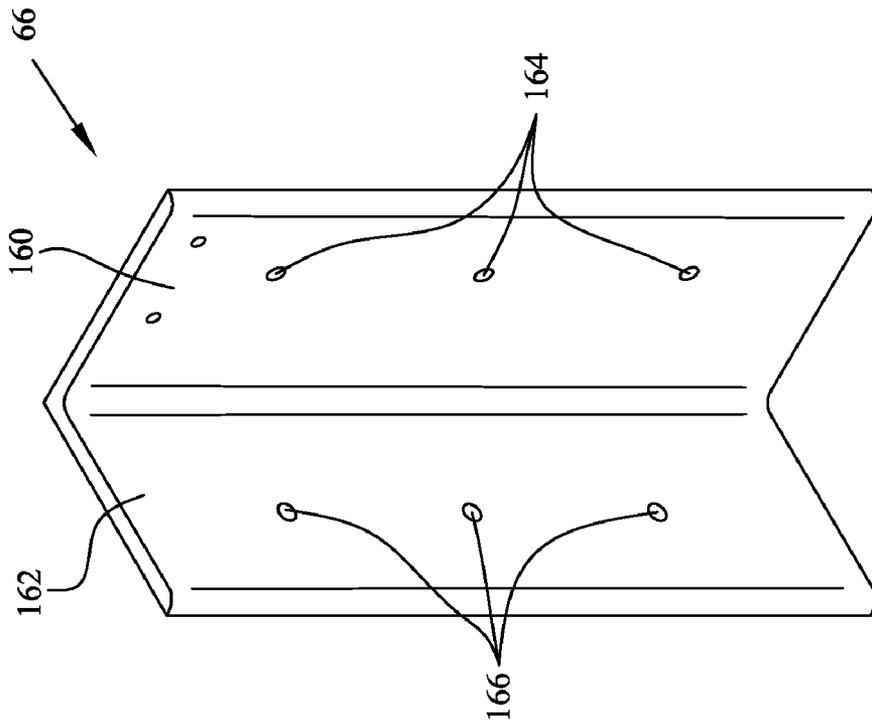


FIG. 11

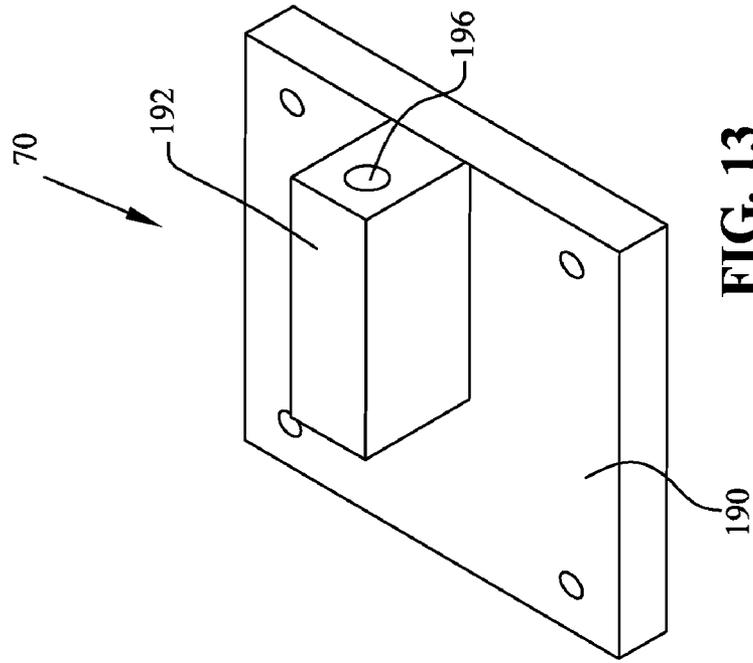


FIG. 13

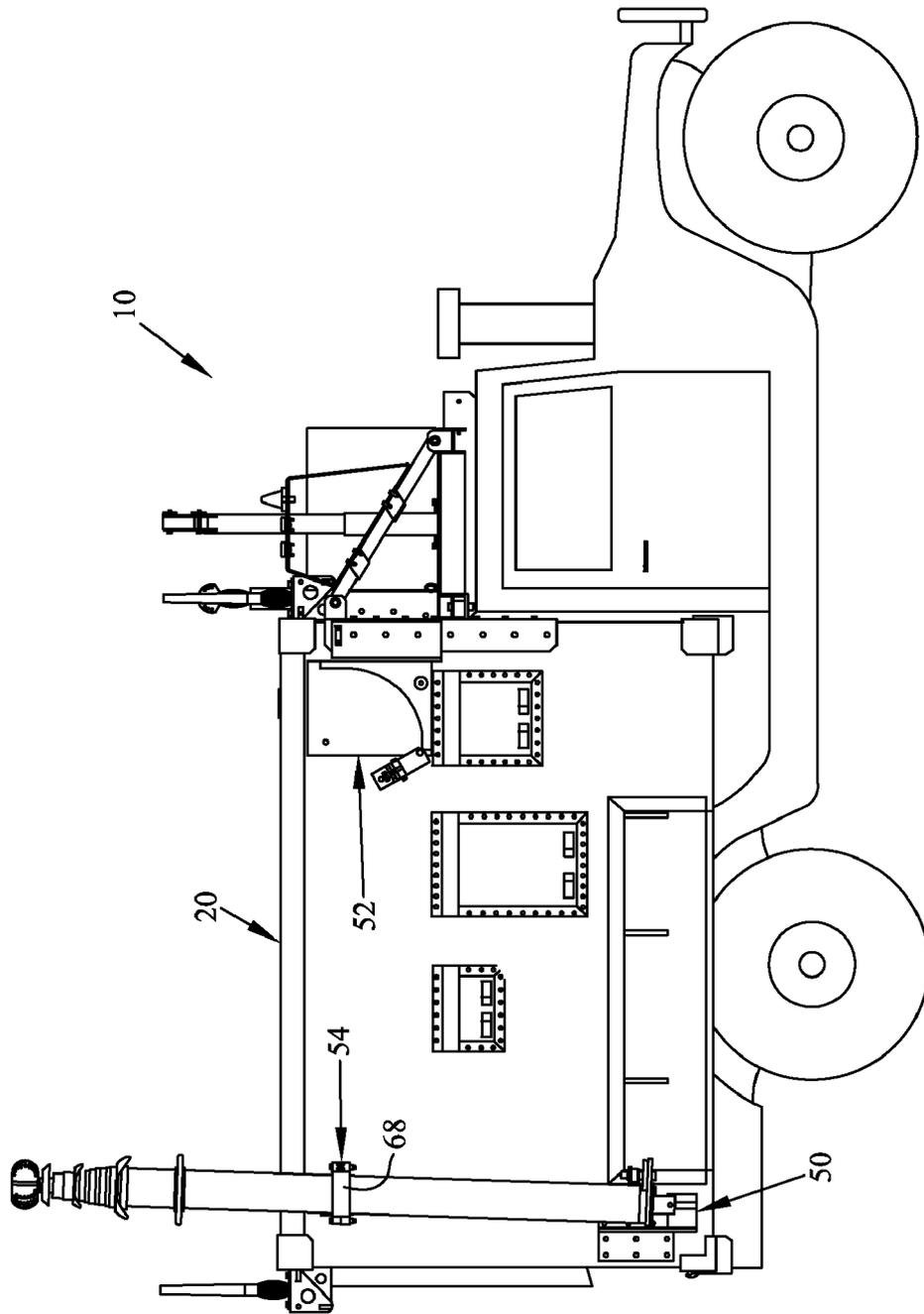


FIG. 14

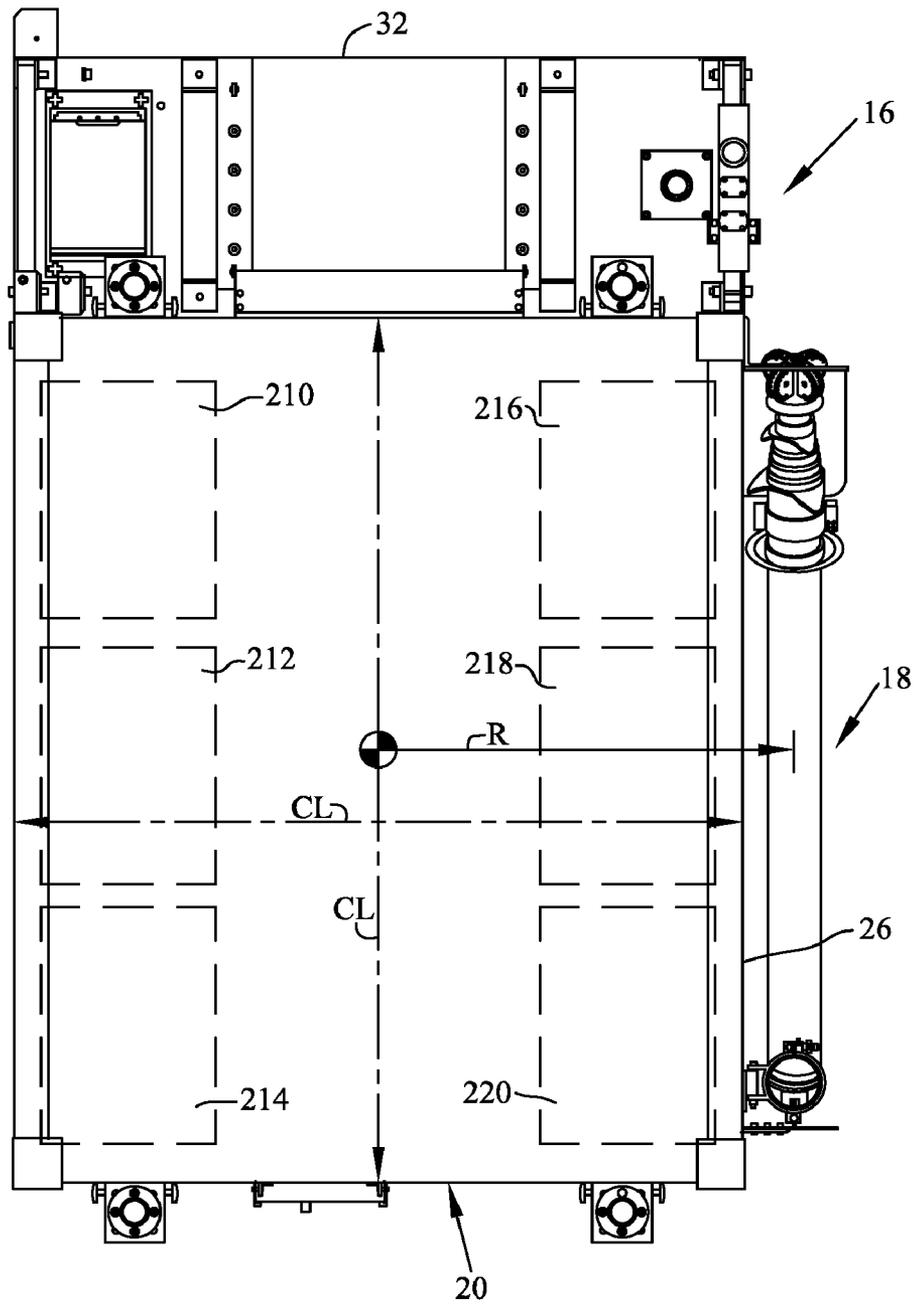


FIG. 15

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VEHICLE AND MAST MOUNTING ASSEMBLY THEREFOR

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/291,694, filed Dec. 31, 2009, entitled "VEHICLE AND MAST MOUNTING ASSEMBLY THEREFOR," the disclosure of which is expressly incorporated by reference herein. The present application is also related to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/696,778, filed Jan. 29, 2010, entitled "PROTECTIVE MEMBERS FOR A SIGNAL INTERFACE ASSEMBLY", U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/696,861, filed Jan. 29, 2010, entitled "COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLE", and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/696,787, filed Jan. 29, 2010, entitled "MODULAR PANELS WITH REMOVABLE PLATE", the disclosures of which are expressly incorporated by reference herein.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

The invention described herein was made in the performance of official duties by employees of the Department of the Navy and may be manufactured, used and licensed by or for the United States Government for any governmental purpose without payment of any royalties thereon.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Oftentimes it is necessary in the commercial and military communications field to carry antenna masts for the use of receiving radio frequency signals. These masts are generally telescopic and can be either standalone or vehicle mounted.

The standalone masts can be carried in bags and removed at the point of use and manually erected, having guy wires for maintaining the mast in an upright position. Typically, the vehicle mounted masts are also held by guy wires, as the masts are telescopically extendable from a collapsed length of 8-10 feet to an erected height of 20-100 feet.

The vehicle mounted masts tend to be cumbersome and raise the vehicle height or weight substantially. In the case of military vehicles, both height (vertical clearance) and weight are important as oftentimes, the entire vehicles are shipped via aircraft.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In one embodiment, a mast assembly comprises a mast having a pivot end and an extendable end; a pivot connection assembly for attachment to the mast pivot end; a first clamp assembly for clamping retention of the mast in a stowed position; and a second clamp assembly for clamping retention of the mast in an erect position.

The assembly could be wall mounted where the pivot connection assembly pivotally attaches the mast to the wall; and the first and second clamp assemblies are also attached to the wall. The assembly could also be in the form of a mast mounting assembly, comprising a pivot connection assembly for a mast, the pivot connection member comprising a first portion fixable to a structure, a second portion fixable to a mast, and a pivot section interconnecting the first and second portions; a first clamp member for retention of the mast in a stowed position; and a second clamp member for retention of the mast in an erect position. The assembly could also be

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attached to a vehicle, where the vehicle has a frame; ground engaging members supporting the frame; and a propulsion mechanism for propelling the ground engaging members. The wall could be a vehicle sidewall. A method of making a transportable mast and a method of erecting a transportable mast are also described herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side view of the vehicle of the present disclosure; FIG. 2 is a front left perspective view of the shelter carried by the vehicle of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a right side view of the shelter shown in FIG. 2 showing the mast in the stowed position;

FIG. 4A shows a top view of the pivot member for attachment to the mast;

FIG. 4B shows a side view of the pivot member of FIG. 4A;

FIG. 4C shows a cross-sectional view of the pivot member through lines 4C-4C of FIG. 4A;

FIG. 5 shows the bracket member of the pivot connection assembly;

FIG. 6 shows the backup bracket for the pivot bracket shown in FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 shows a clamp assembly for attachment to a shelter and for retaining the mast in a stowed position;

FIG. 8 shows a front view of the clamp assembly of FIG. 7;

FIG. 9 shows an end view of the clamp assembly of FIG. 7;

FIG. 10 shows the bracket member of the clamp assembly of FIG. 7;

FIG. 11 shows a perspective view of the backup bracket for the clamp assembly of FIG. 7;

FIG. 12 shows a clamp assembly for attachment to a shelter and for retaining the mast in an erect position;

FIG. 13 shows the bracket portion of the clamp assembly of FIG. 12;

FIG. 14 is a view similar to that of FIG. 1, showing the mast in a second position, erect position, prior to the telescopic extension; and

FIG. 15 shows up an upper plan view of the shelter with the internal equipment shown diagrammatically.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENT

With reference first to FIG. 1, a vehicle 10 is disclosed which as disclosed is depicted as a truck, and more particularly as a military vehicle. It should be understood that the disclosure is equally applicable to commercial vehicles for use, for example, in radio or TV broadcasting or in any other application in which an extendable mast is used.

As shown, vehicle 10 comprises a frame 12, and ground engaging members 14 which support the frame 12. As depicted, the ground engaging members are shown as tires and wheels, however it should be understood that other ground engaging members such as tracks or skis could be employed. The invention is equally applicable to any water flotation devices. As shown, a shelter assembly 16 is supported by the vehicle frame 12 and includes a mast assembly 18 which will be described in greater detail herein.

With respect now to FIGS. 2 and 3, shelter assembly 16 is shown in greater detail. Shelter assembly 16 includes an enclosure 20 having a top wall 22, a front wall 24, lower edge 25 (FIG. 3), side walls 26, 28 and rear wall 30. Shelter assembly 16 could also include a front work platform 32 including a hoist 34, as well as a plurality of antennas positioned around enclosure 20 and shown generally at 36.

As shown best in FIG. 3, mast assembly 18 is comprised of a mast 40 as well as a mast mounting assembly. Mast mounting assembly is comprised of pivot connection assembly 50, a first connection assembly 52 and a second connection assembly 54. First connection assembly 52 and second connection assembly 54 are in the form of clamp assemblies as described herein.

Pivot connection assembly 50 includes a pivot mount member 56, fixed to the bottom of the mast 40, and a bracket member 58, to which the pivot mount member rotates, as described herein. A backup bracket 60 is positioned against bracket member 58 as described herein. Connection assembly 52 is defined as a clamp assembly including a clamp 62 and a bracket 64. A backup bracket 66 is positioned against bracket 64 as described herein. Connection assembly 54 is defined as a clamp assembly including a clamp member 68 and a bracket member 70.

With respect now to FIGS. 4A-4C, pivot mount member 56 includes a flange 80 for attachment to the end of mast 40 and a cylindrical extension portion 82 for connection to pivot bracket 50. Extension portion 82 includes apertures such as 84 for receiving a fastener as described herein.

As shown in FIG. 5, bracket 58 includes a back wall 90, side wall 92 and lower wall 94. Back wall 90 includes a plurality of apertures 96 for connection to side wall 26 (FIG. 3) and side wall 92 includes a plurality of apertures 98 for connection to backup bracket 60. Bracket 58 further comprises a pivot block 100 upstanding from lower wall 94 and spaced apart from side wall 92 by way of a spacer rib 102. Pivot block 100 includes an aperture 104 for alignment with aperture 84 (FIG. 4C) of pivot member 56, as described herein.

With respect to FIG. 6, backup bracket 60 includes a back wall 108 for attachment to shelter side wall 26 and a side wall 110 for placement against side wall 92 of bracket 58. Wall 108 includes apertures 112 for attachment to side wall 26 and wall 110 includes apertures 114 which match in template form with apertures 98 on wall 92 (FIG. 5), for attachment to side wall 92 of bracket 58.

With reference now to FIGS. 7-10, connection assembly 52 will be described. As shown in FIG. 7, bracket 64 includes back wall 120 and side wall 122. Back wall 120 has apertures 124 for attachment to side wall 26, whereas side wall 122 has apertures 126, for attachment to back-up bracket 66. Bracket 64 further includes a lower wall 128 which retains a pivot block 130 (FIG. 10) with a spacer rib 132 positioned between spacer block 130 and side wall 122. Spacer block 130 includes an aperture 134 extending therethrough for retaining clamp 62, as described herein.

With reference now to FIG. 9, clamp 62 is in the form of semi-cylindrical halves 140 and 142 where half 140 includes pivot feet 144 which flank pivot block 130 (FIG. 9) having a fastener 146 extending therethrough. Meanwhile, clamp halves 140 and 142 are pivotally attached at side 148 and are clamped at side 150 by way of a swing bolt 152 which swings through a slot 154 (FIGS. 7 and 9) in the clamp halves 140, 142. It should be understood that swing bolt 152 includes a threaded star wheel 158, which when loosened, allows swing bolt 152 to rotate through slot 154, whereupon clamp half 142 may pivot open about fastener 159.

With reference now to FIG. 11, back-up bracket 66 is shown having plates 160, 162 having apertures 164, 166 respectively, as more fully described below.

With reference now to FIGS. 12 and 13, clamp assembly 54 is shown having clamp halves 170 and 172 where clamp half 170 includes pivot feet 174. Clamp halves 170 and 172 rotate about side 176 and lock about side 178 in a virtually identical

manner as described above with respect to clamp 62. Thus, side 178 includes a swing bolt 180 which can be loosened to allow clamp half 172 to rotate about side 176 and more particularly about fastener 179. Bracket 70 includes flange 190 for attachment to side wall 26 and a pivot block 192 for mounting pivot feet by way of fastener 194 through aperture 196 (FIG. 13).

As shown, mast 40 is telescopic, and includes a plurality of coaxially extendable sections 202 (FIG. 3). Mast could be of the type offered by The WILL-BURT Company of Orrville Ohio, as one of their quick erecting antenna masts (QEAM).

As described above, the mast assembly 18 is assembled by attaching bracket member 58 to sidewall 26 as shown in FIG. 3. Back-up bracket 60 is then attached to sidewall 26 and to bracket member 58. It should be understood that plate 92 (FIG. 5) would be positioned adjacent to plate 110 (FIG. 6) with apertures 98, 114 aligned. Fasteners could then be inserted to secure the bracket 58 and back-up bracket 60 together. Pivot mount member 56 is then attached to mast 40, and pivot mount member 56 is rotatably secured to bracket member 58 by way of a fastener 204 (FIG. 3). Connection assembly 52 may then be attached to sidewall 26 and to back-up bracket 66. As such, bracket 64 is positioned adjacent to sidewall 26 and fasteners are inserted through apertures 124 (FIG. 7). Back-up bracket 66 is then positioned with plate 160 against sidewall 26 and plate 162 adjacent to wall 122, with apertures 166 (FIG. 11) aligned with apertures 126 (FIG. 7). Finally, connection assembly 54 is attached to sidewall 26 with bracket 70 attached to sidewall 26.

To stow the mast 40, mast 40 is positioned in FIG. 3, with clamp halves 140, 142 encompassing the mast 40, and with swing bolt 152 (FIG. 9) in the locked position. As shown in the stowed position of FIG. 3, mast is confined within the envelope of the sidewall 26, that is, it extends diagonally from corner to corner, but between front wall 24, rear wall 30, top wall 22, and lower edge 25. In this configuration, the vehicle 10 can be maneuvered from place to place with mast 40 in the stowed position. Vehicle 10 may also be loaded onto transport vehicles such as cargo planes as the mast in the stowed position is lower than the top wall 22 of the vehicle.

When the vehicle arrives at a site where the antenna needs to be erected, clamp 62 is released and mast 40 is rotated counterclockwise (as viewed in FIG. 14) to clamp 68. Clamp halves 170 and 172 are then positioned around mast 40, and swing bolt 170 is locked to tighten clamp member around mast 40. Mast 40 may then be erected according to the mast specifications, for example, by jack screw or pneumatic activation.

With reference to FIG. 15, mast assembly 18 extends outwardly from sidewall 26, and extends a distance "R" from the lateral centerline of the shelter 20. The shelter includes electronic equipment, for example radio transmission equipment. This equipment could be mounted to the inside of the shelter walls, or could be provided on electronic racks. This equipment is shown diagrammatically, as items 210-220 in FIG. 15. This equipment is arranged for its weight distribution, such that the center of gravity is laterally and longitudinally centered with the shelter, as shown in FIG. 15. Said differently, the location of items 210-220 is such as to compensate for the offset mass position of the mast assembly 18.

It should be appreciated from the disclosure that the elements of the pivot connection assembly 50, first connection assembly 52 and second connection assembly 54 are constructed of suitable materials for the application, and as shown are steel members, such as steel plate, steel channels, steel tubes, etc. However these items could be comprised of any alloys or composites suitable for the use as described. The

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connection of the various members is done by a typical connection technology such as welding, but fasteners, bonding etc. could also be employed. The pivot connection assembly 50, first connection assembly 52 and second connection assembly 54 are also described as held to the shelter enclosure 20 by way of fasteners, but it should be appreciated that the bracket members could be fixed to the shelter by way of welding or other suitable fastening techniques. In addition some of the components, such as the brackets themselves could be integrated into the shelter sidewall 26 altogether. These and other variants should be appreciated readily to one skilled in the art.

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

What is claimed is:

1. A vehicle, comprising:
 - a frame;
 - ground engaging members supporting the frame;
 - a propulsion mechanism for propelling the ground engaging members;
 - at least one wall supported by the frame;
 - a mast having a first and second section, said first section is located in proximity to a first end of said mast and said second section is located in proximity a second and opposing end of said mast;
 - a pivot connection assembly pivotally attaching the first section of the mast to the wall;
 - a first connection assembly attached to the one wall for releasably coupling to said second section of the mast and further is adapted for retention of the mast in a first position; and
 - a second connection assembly attached to the one wall for releasably coupling to said second section of the mast and further is adapted for retention of the mast in a second position;
- wherein said first connection assembly comprises a first clamp assembly for releasably retaining the mast in said first position, said second connection assembly comprises a second clamp assembly for releasably retaining the mast in said second position;
- wherein each of the first and second clamp members each comprise a clamp member and a bracket, where the clamp members are supported by the bracket and pivotally movable relative to said bracket for alignment with the mast;
- wherein said first clamp member defines a clamp opening, said first clamp member's clamp opening is coupled to its said bracket such that said first clamp member's clamp opening is coaxially aligned with said mast such that said first clamp may releasably receive said second section of said mast when it is placed in said first position.
2. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein the at least one wall forms a portion of an enclosure on the vehicle.

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3. The vehicle of claim 2, wherein the at least one wall is a sidewall.

4. The vehicle of claim 3, wherein the pivot connection assembly is mounted adjacent to a lower corner of the sidewall.

5. The vehicle of claim 4, wherein the first connection assembly is positioned on the sidewall adjacent a diagonal line formed along the sidewall.

6. The vehicle of claim 5, wherein the sidewall is substantially rectangular and the mast extends diagonally substantially between diametric corners of the sidewall when stowed.

7. The vehicle of claim 6, wherein the second connection assembly is positioned substantially above the pivot connection assembly, such when the mast is said second position, the mast extends substantially vertically away from a plane defined by contact points with said ground engaging members.

8. The vehicle of claim 7, wherein the mast is telescopically extendable.

9. The vehicle of claim 8, wherein the mast is an antenna.

10. The vehicle of claim 9, wherein the vehicle includes a second and opposite sidewall and the vehicle further comprises internal weighted objects, adjacent to the second sidewall to offset the weight of the mast, when in said first or second position.

11. The vehicle of claim 10, wherein the weighted objects include electronic panels for use with the antenna.

12. A vehicle as in claim 1, wherein said clamp members each comprise a first and second semi-cylindrical halves where said first half includes pivot coupling feet which flank an attachment point pivot block forming part of said first connection assembly and having a fastener extending there-through.

13. A vehicle as in claim 12, wherein said clamp halves are further formed with a pivotal attachment structure that is adapted to pivotally attach each said claim half on one side of said clamp halves.

14. A vehicle as in claim 13, wherein said first and second clamp halves are further formed with a releasable coupling structure on a substantially opposing side of said pivotal attachment structure, said releasable coupling structure is formed and adapted to releasably couple said first and second clamp halves by way of a swing bolt which swings through a slot in the clamp halves' releasable coupling structure.

15. A vehicle as in claim 14, wherein said swing bolt further comprises a threaded rotatable manual clamping adjustment structure adapted with protrusions formed to facilitate human manipulation and rotation of said threaded rotatable manual clamping structure which, when loosened by rotation on a threaded portion of said swing bolt, allows said swing bolt to rotate through said slot, whereupon said second clamp half may pivot open about said pivotal attachment structure and thereby receive said second portion of said mast.

16. A vehicle as in claim 15, wherein said first connection assembly further comprises first, second, and third planar sections which are substantially orthogonal to each other and form a three sided structure, wherein said first planar structure is coupled to said one wall.

17. A vehicle as in claim 16, wherein said first connection assembly further comprising a rib structure coupled to said

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second and third planar sections, said rib structure is further formed in a substantially triangular shape having a first, second, and third side, said first side is formed in an arc shape, said second and third sides form a 90 degree angle to each other and couple to said first and second planar sections, wherein said arc shape is adapted to permit said second section of said mast to coaxially lie within said second clamp without touching said rib structure, said rib's second and third

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sides are more than half the corresponding length of said second and third planar section.

18. A vehicle as in claim 16, wherein said first connection assembly further comprises a fourth planar section that is coupled to an edge of said first and second planar sections.

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