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Lindemann et al.

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(54) **PISTON PLATE CONNECTION WITH BLIND RIVETING**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
B21J 15/02 (2006.01)
F16H 45/02 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **29/524.1**; 29/525.06; 192/3.29; 192/200

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
None
See application file for complete search history.

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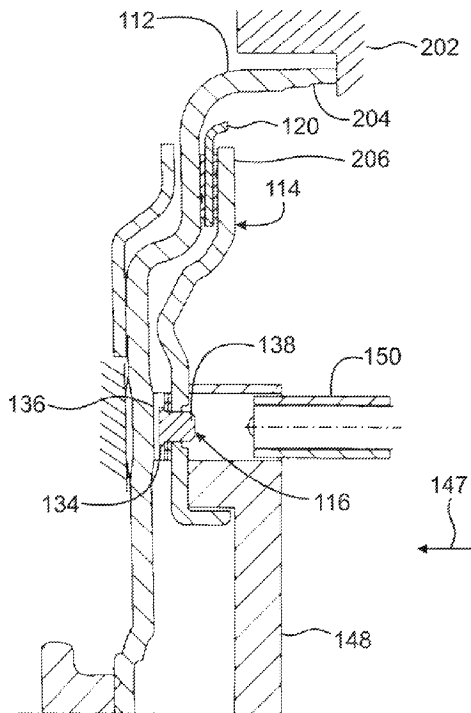
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A clutch assembly for a torque converter, including: a cover; a piston plate including a hole; and a rivet in the hole. The rivet includes a rivet head. Prior to applying pressure to the rivet to fix the rivet to the piston plate, the rivet head is clamped between the piston plate and the cover. A clutch assembly for a torque converter, including: a cover; a piston plate with a hole; a leaf spring with a first end fixedly attached to the cover and a second end; and a rivet connecting the second end of the leaf spring to the piston plate. The rivet includes: a head disposed between the leaf spring second end and the cover; and a shaft in the piston plate hole. The piston plate or the cover is deflectable to clamp the rivet head between the cover and the piston plate before the shaft is expanded.

4 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



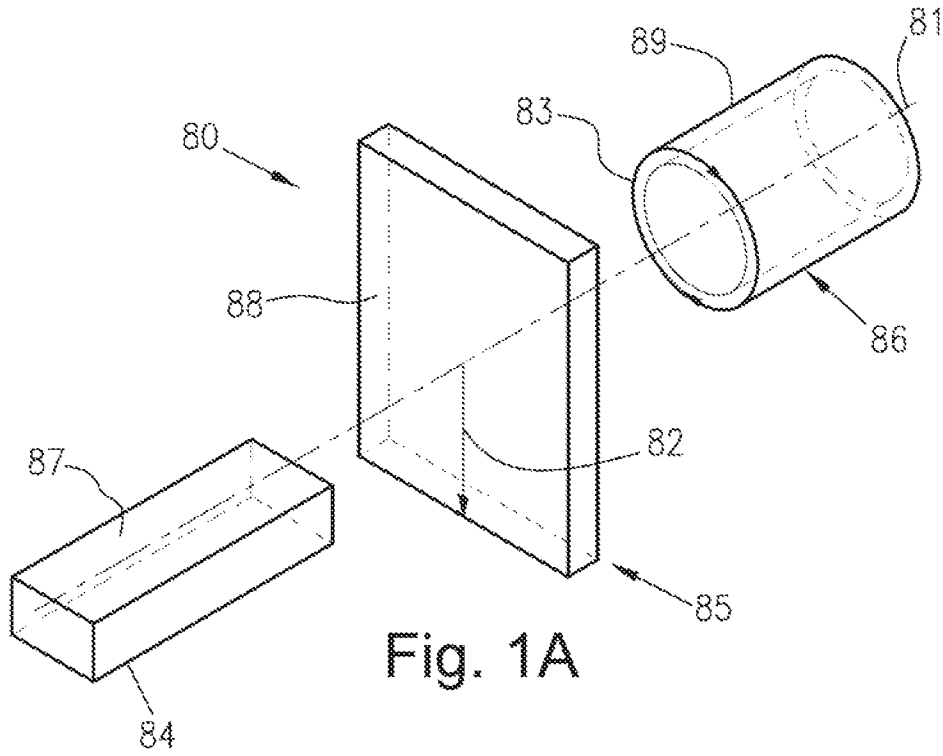


Fig. 1A

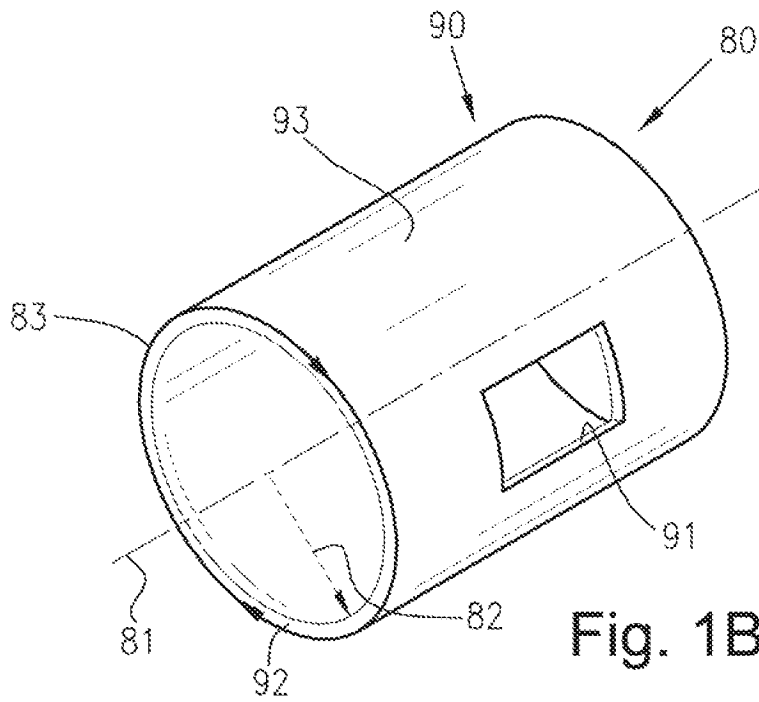


Fig. 1B

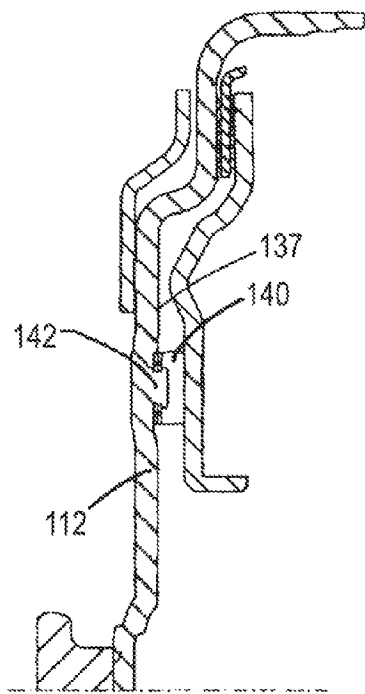
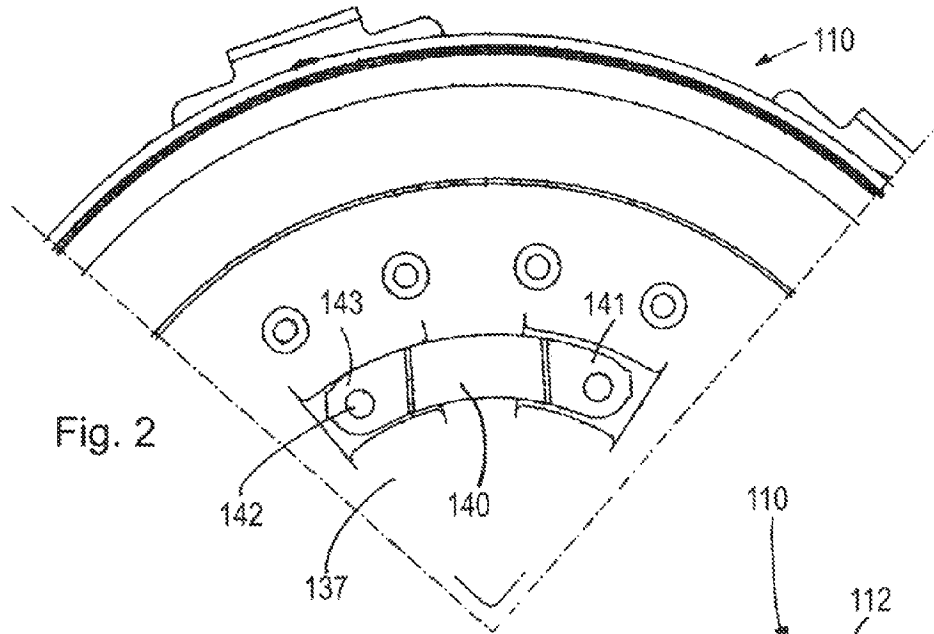


Fig. 3

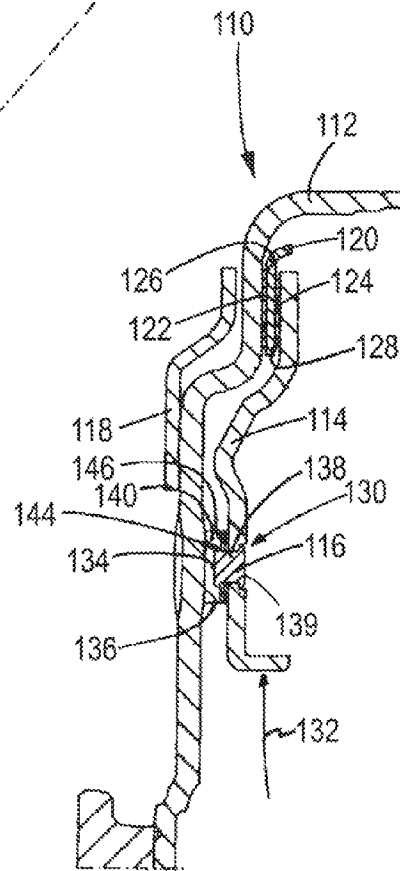


Fig. 4

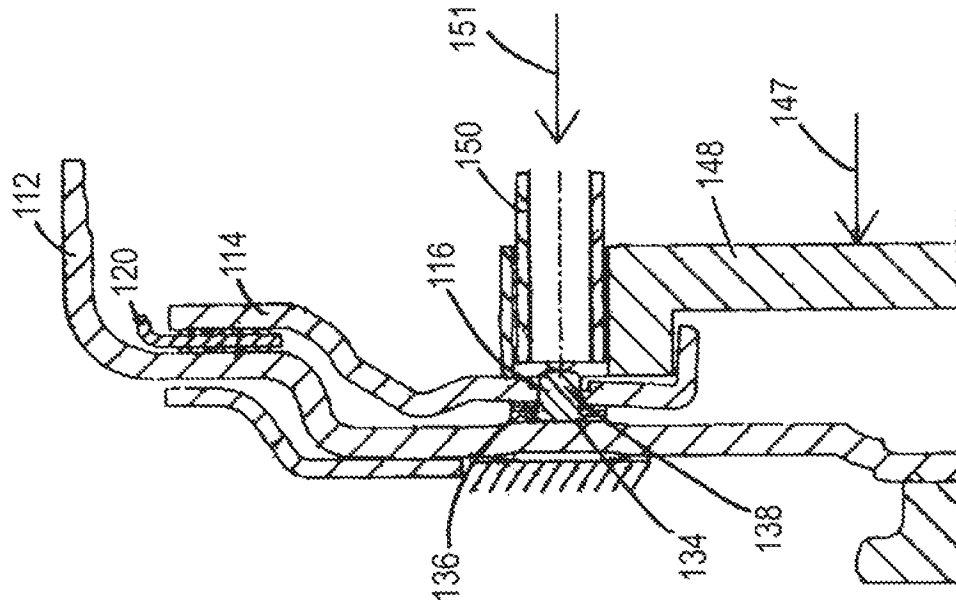


Fig. 5C

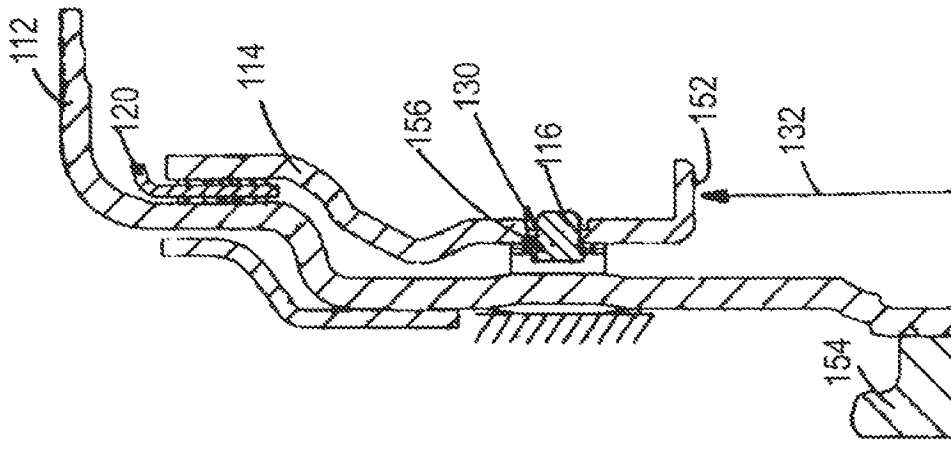


Fig. 5B

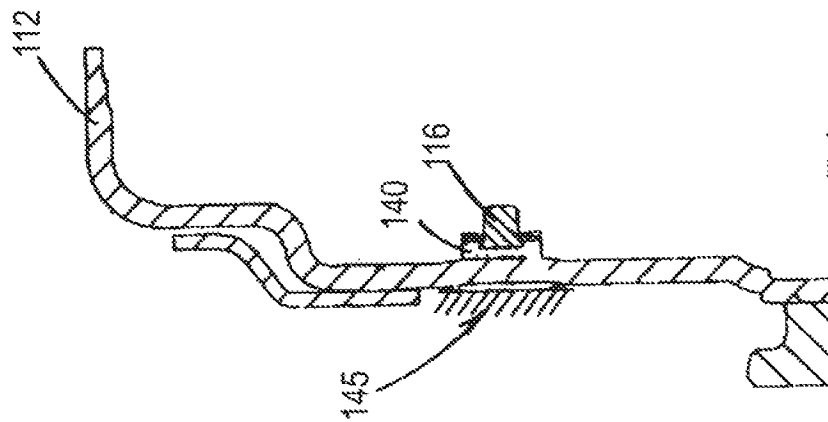


Fig. 5A

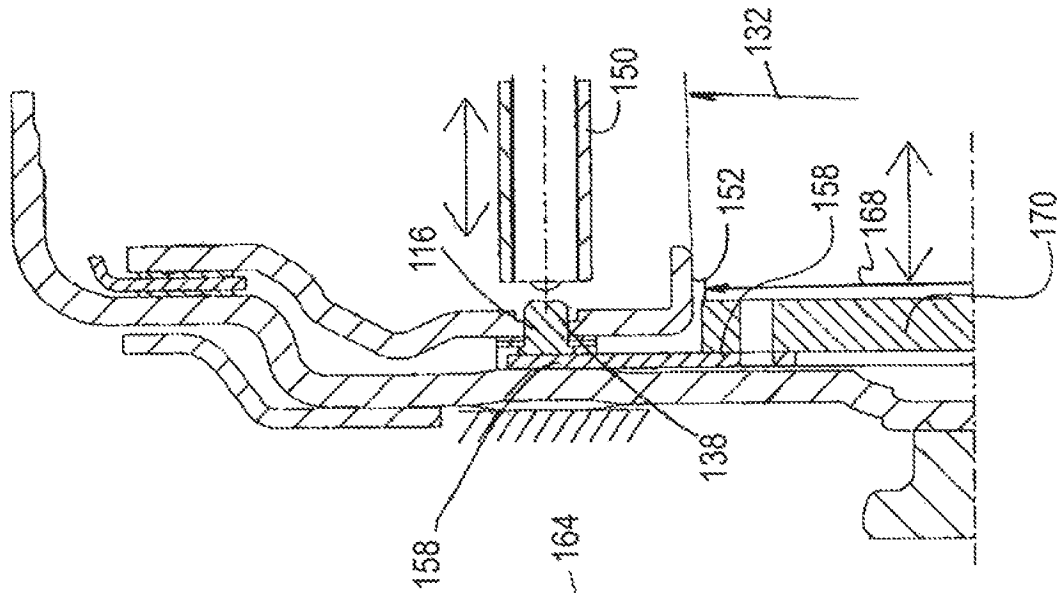


Fig. 7

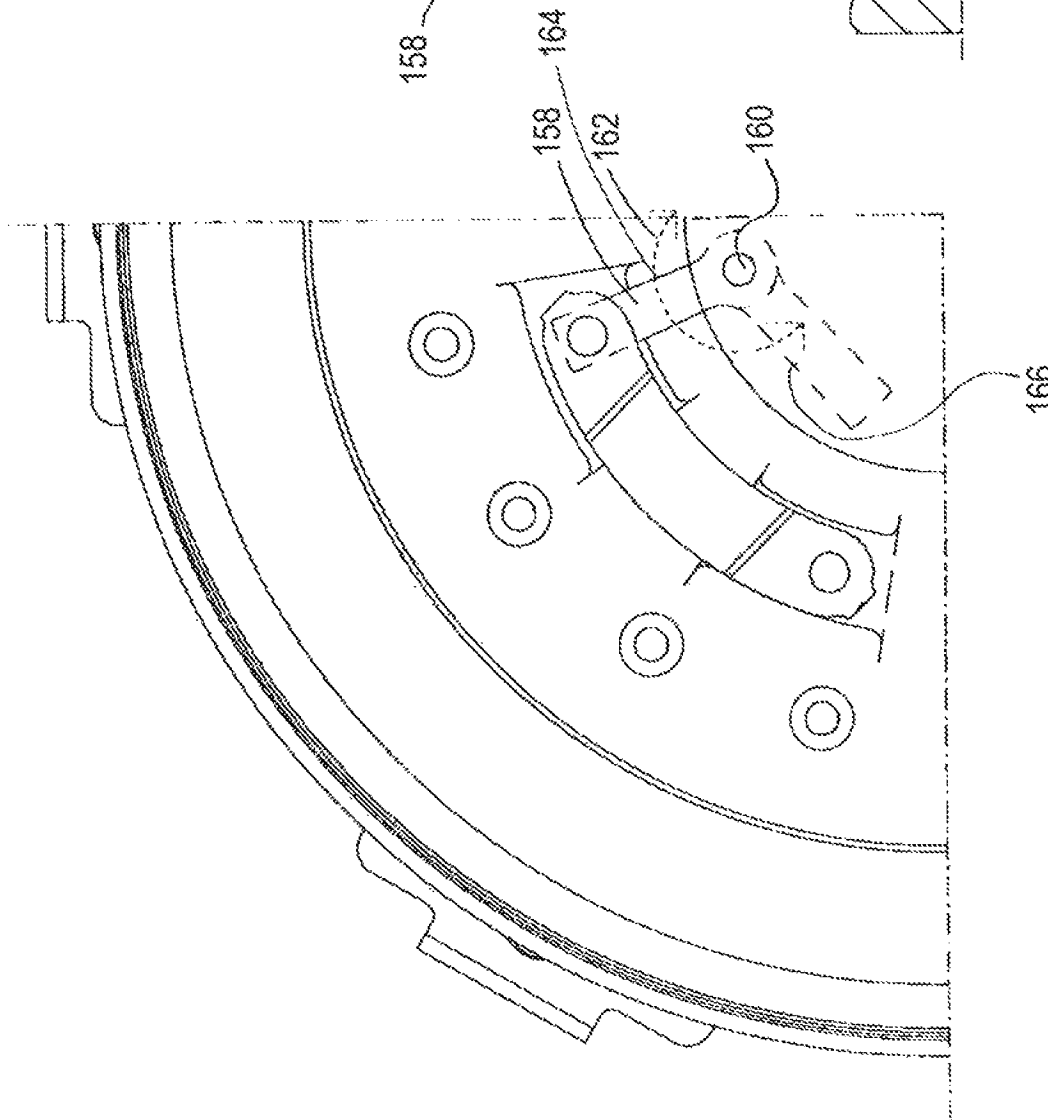


Fig. 6

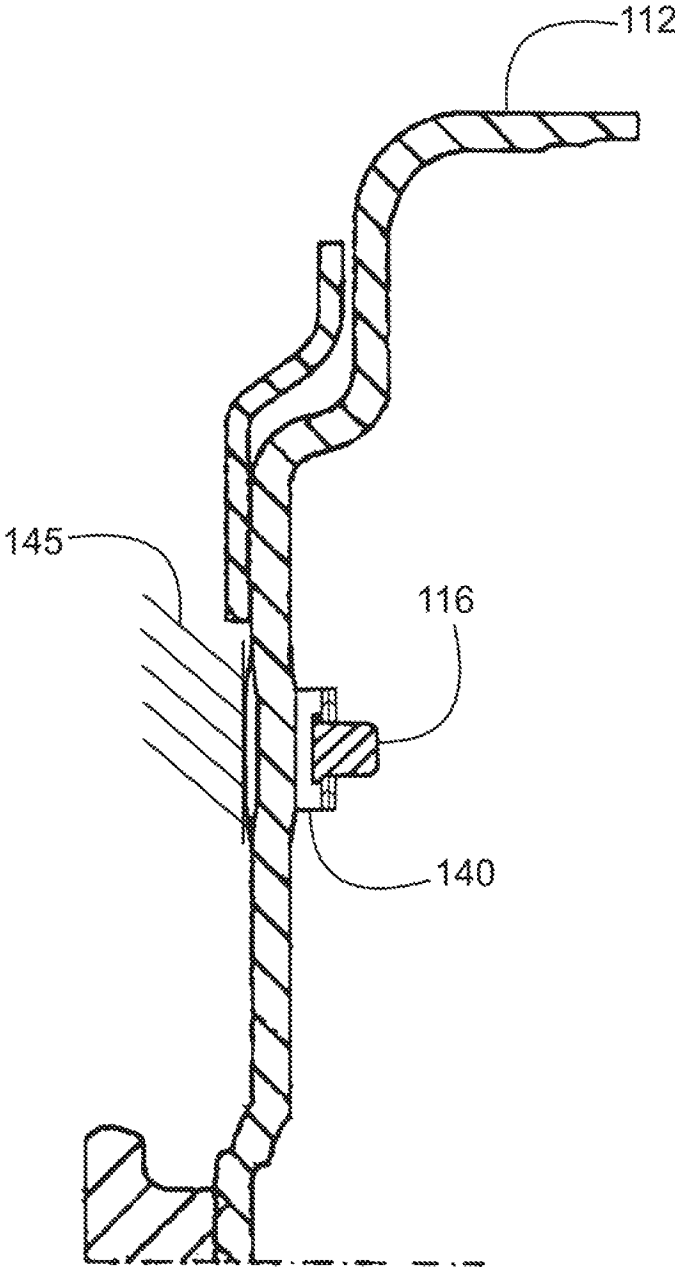


Fig. 8A

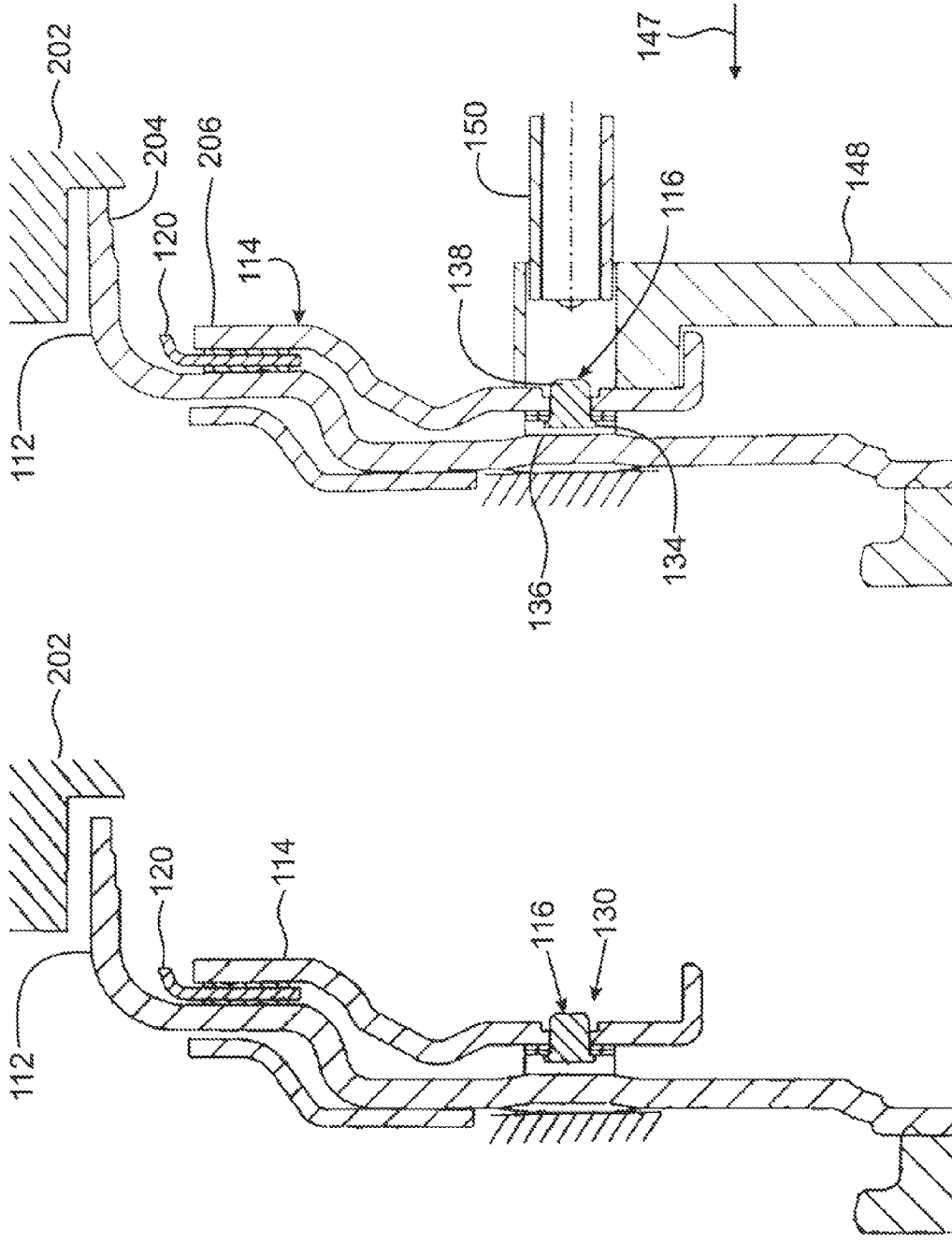


Fig. 8C

Fig. 8B

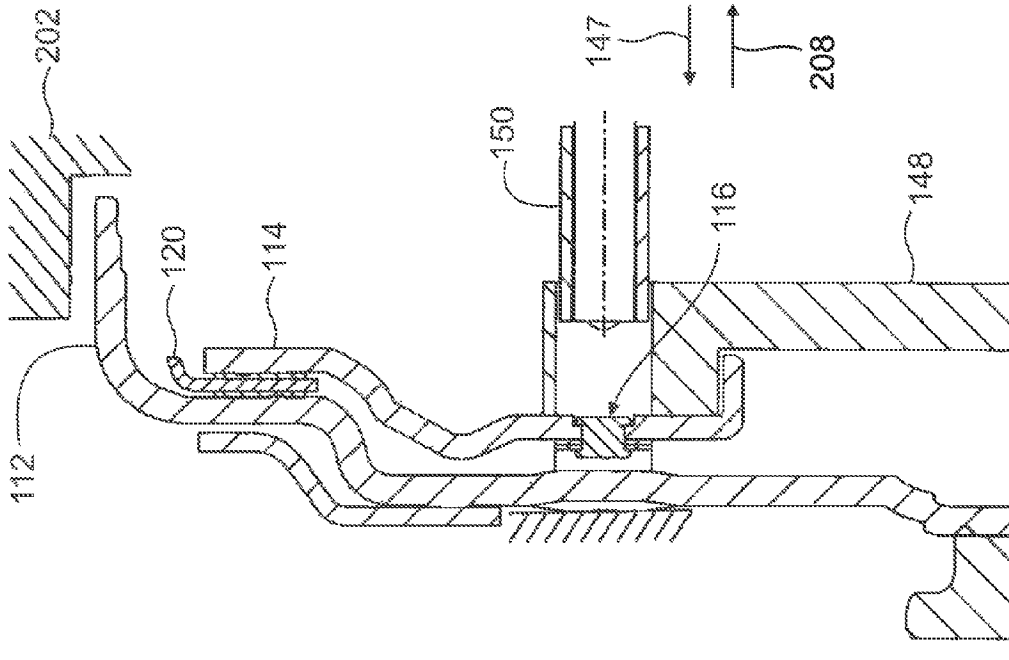


Fig. 8E

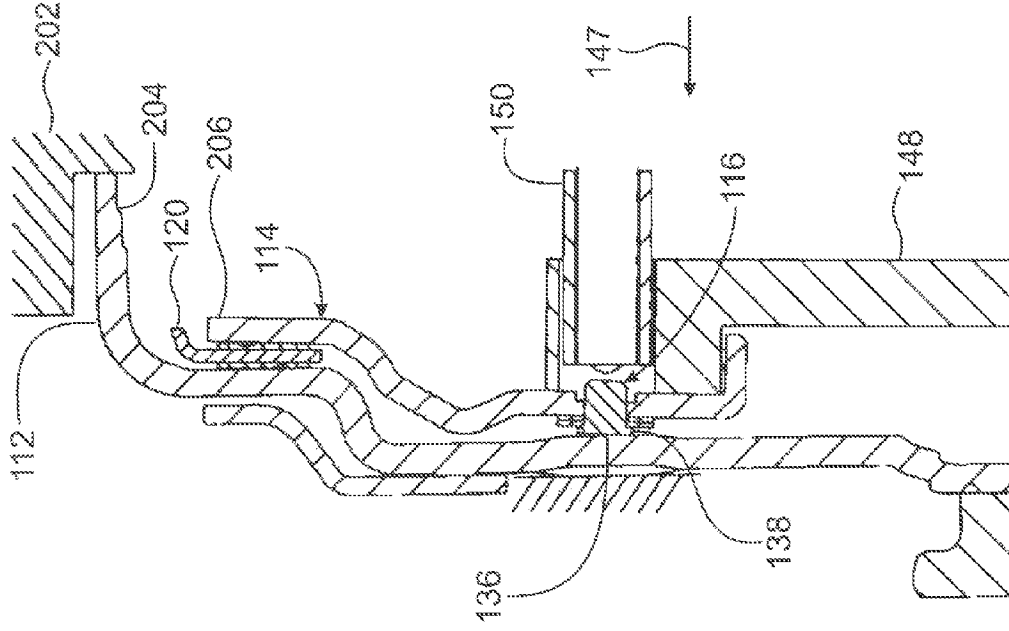


Fig. 8D

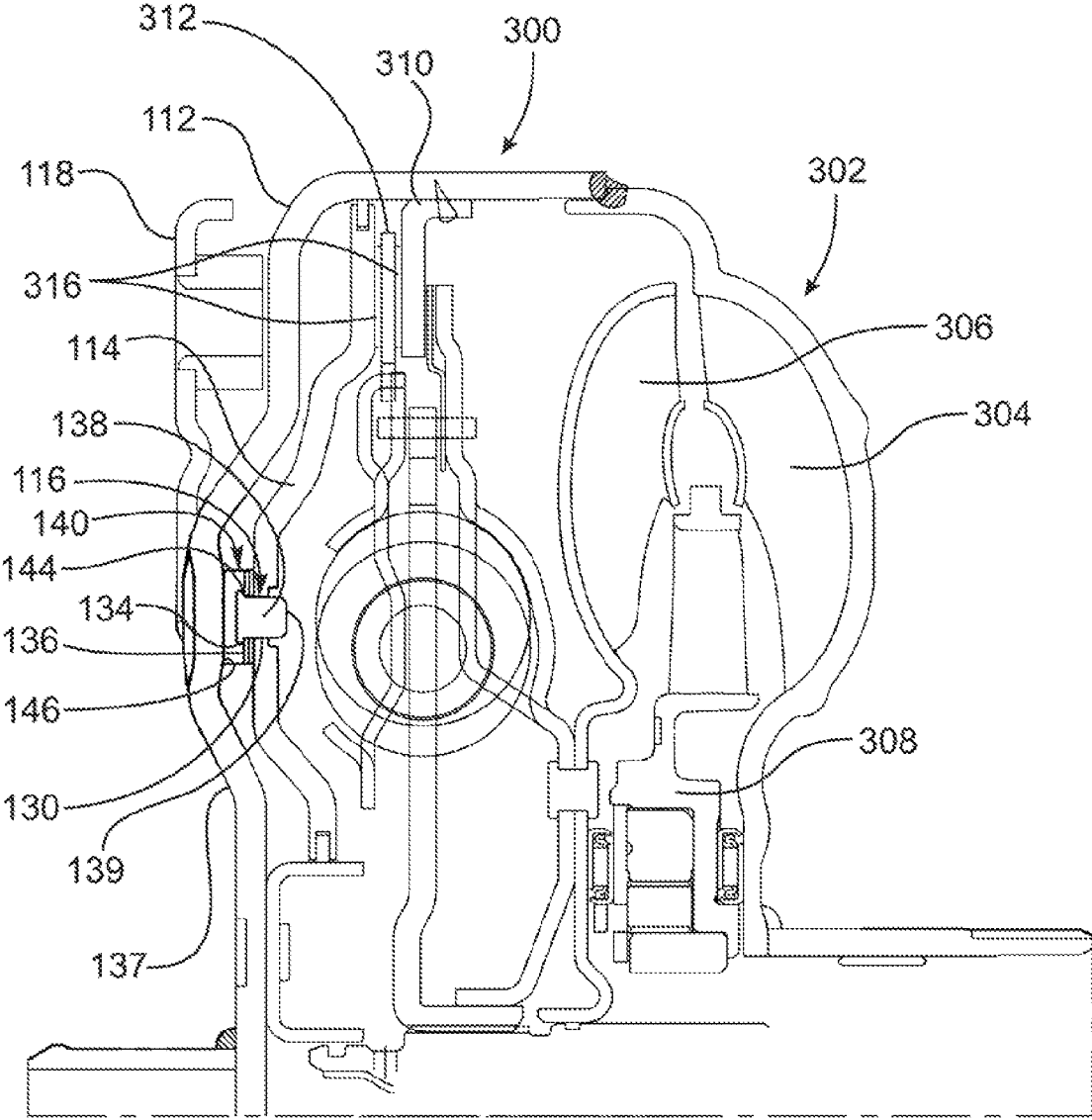


Fig. 9

1

PISTON PLATE CONNECTION WITH BLIND RIVETING

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119 (e) of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/253,181 filed on Oct. 20, 2009 and U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/352,946 filed on Jun. 9, 2010 which applications are incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates generally to a piston plate connection in a torque converter, and more specifically to a piston plate connection with blind riveting.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

U.S. Pat. No. 6,193,036 teaches a through hole in a piston or cover wall for fixing the piston to circumferential tabs. The holes are finally closed by shutters.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Example aspects of the present invention broadly comprise a clutch assembly for a torque converter, including: a cover for driving engagement with a prime mover; a piston plate including a hole; and a rivet disposed in the hole. The rivet includes a rivet head; and prior to applying pressure to the rivet to fix the rivet to the piston plate, the rivet head is clamped between the piston plate and the cover.

Other example aspects of the invention broadly comprise a clutch assembly for a torque converter, including: a cover including a radial wall; a piston plate arranged to engage the clutch and including a hole; a leaf spring including a first end fixedly attached to the cover radial wall and a second end; and a rivet connecting the second end of the leaf spring to the piston plate. The rivet includes: a head axially disposed between the leaf spring second end and the cover; and a shaft extending through the piston plate hole. The piston plate or the cover is deflectable to clamp the rivet head between the radial wall and the piston plate before the shaft is expanded.

Other example aspects of the invention broadly comprise a method of assembling a piston plate and cover for a torque converter including: installing a rivet including a rivet head and a rivet body into a hole in the piston plate; clamping the rivet head between the piston plate and the cover; and expanding the rivet body into the piston plate hole.

Other example aspects of the invention broadly comprise a method of assembling a piston plate and cover for a torque converter including: installing a shimming leaf into the cover; installing a rivet including a rivet head and a rivet body into a piston plate hole; supporting the rivet head with the shimming leaf; and expanding the rivet body into the piston plate hole.

Other example aspects of the invention broadly comprise a clutch assembly for a torque converter, including: a piston plate including a hole; and a rivet disposed in the hole. The rivet includes a rivet head; and the piston plate is displaceable to clamp the rivet head between the cover and the piston plate as pressure is applied to the rivet to fix the rivet to the piston plate.

Other example aspects of the invention broadly comprise a method of assembling a piston plate and cover for a torque converter including: installing a rivet including a rivet head and a rivet body into a piston plate hole; axially displacing the

2

piston plate so that the rivet head is clamped between the cover and the piston plate; and expanding the rivet body into the piston plate hole.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The nature and mode of operation of the present invention will now be more fully described in the following detailed description of the invention taken with the accompanying drawing figures, in which:

FIG. 1A is a perspective view of a cylindrical coordinate system demonstrating spatial terminology used in the present application;

FIG. 1B is a perspective view of an object in the cylindrical coordinate system of FIG. 1A demonstrating spatial terminology used in the present application;

FIG. 2 is a front view of a clutch assembly with the piston plate removed for clarity, according to an example aspect of the invention;

FIG. 3 is a section view of the clutch assembly shown in FIG. 2 taken through a cover rivet;

FIG. 4 is a section view of the clutch assembly shown in FIG. 2 taken through a piston plate rivet;

FIGS. 5A-5C illustrate a method of assembling a piston plate and a cover for a clutch assembly, according to an example aspect of the invention;

FIG. 6 is a front view of a clutch assembly with a shimming leaf installed and a piston plate removed for clarity, according to an example aspect of the invention;

FIG. 7 is a section view of the clutch assembly shown in FIG. 2 taken through a piston rivet;

FIGS. 8A-8E illustrate a method of assembling a piston plate and a cover for a clutch assembly, according to an example aspect of the invention; and,

FIG. 9 is a section view of a clutch assembly taken through a piston plate rivet.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

At the outset, it should be appreciated that like drawing numbers appearing in different drawing views identify identical, or functionally similar, structural elements. Furthermore, it is understood that this invention is not limited only to the particular embodiments, methodology, materials and modifications described herein, and as such may, of course, vary. It is also understood that the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular aspects only, and is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention, which is limited only by the appended claims.

Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood to one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. Although any methods, devices or materials similar or equivalent to those described herein can be used in the practice or testing of the invention, the following example methods, devices, and materials are now described.

FIG. 1A is a perspective view of cylindrical coordinate system **80** demonstrating spatial terminology used in the present application. The present invention is at least partially described within the context of a cylindrical coordinate system. System **80** has a longitudinal axis **81**, used as the reference for the directional and spatial terms that follow. The adjectives “axial,” “radial,” and “circumferential” are with respect to an orientation parallel to axis **81**, radius **82** (which is orthogonal to axis **81**), and circumference **83**, respectively. The adjectives “axial,” “radial” and “circumferential” also are regarding orientation parallel to respective planes. To

clarify the disposition of the various planes, objects **84**, **85**, and **86** are used. Surface **87** of object **84** forms an axial plane. That is, axis **81** forms a line along the surface. Surface **88** of object **85** forms a radial plane. That is, radius **82** forms a line along the surface. Surface **89** of object **86** forms a circumferential plane. That is, circumference **83** forms a line along the surface. As a further example, axial movement or disposition is parallel to axis **81**, radial movement or disposition is parallel to radius **82**, and circumferential movement or disposition is parallel to circumference **83**. Rotation is with respect to axis **81**.

The adverbs “axially,” “radially,” and “circumferentially” are with respect to an orientation parallel to axis **81**, radius **82**, or circumference **83**, respectively. The adverbs “axially,” “radially,” and “circumferentially” also are regarding orientation parallel to respective planes.

FIG. 1B is a perspective view of object **90** in cylindrical coordinate system **80** of FIG. 1A demonstrating spatial terminology used in the present application. Cylindrical object **90** is representative of a cylindrical object in a cylindrical coordinate system and is not intended to limit the present invention in any manner. Object **90** includes axial surface **91**, radial surface **92**, and circumferential surface **93**. Surface **91** is part of an axial plane, surface **92** is part of a radial plane, and surface **93** is part of a circumferential plane.

The following description is made with reference to FIGS. 2-4. FIG. 2 is a front view of a clutch assembly with the piston plate removed for clarity, according to an example aspect of the invention. FIG. 3 is a section view of the clutch assembly shown in FIG. 2 taken through a cover rivet. FIG. 4 is a section view of the clutch assembly shown in FIG. 2 taken through a piston plate rivet. Clutch assembly **110** is a portion of a torque converter (not shown). The torque converter may also include a pump, turbine, and stator, as is commonly known in the art. Clutch assembly **110** includes cover **112**, piston plate **114**, and rivet **116**. Cover **112** is drivably engagable to a prime mover, such as a vehicle engine, through drive plate **118**, for example.

Clutch assembly **110** may include drive ring **120** with friction rings **122** and **124** disposed adjacent to cover friction surface **126** and piston plate friction surface **128**, respectively. Drive ring **120** may be drivably connected with a damper (not shown) for the torque converter. The damper may, in turn, be drivably connected with an input shaft of a vehicle transmission so that, when clutch assembly **110** is engaged, driving torque is transferred from the prime mover, through the clutch, and into the transmission.

Piston plate **114** includes hole **130**. Hole **130** is generally disposed near inside diameter **132** of piston plate **114**. Rivet **116** is disposed in hole **130**. Head **134** of rivet **116** is proximate portion **136** of cover **112**. Portion **136** may be a portion of radial wall **137** of cover **112**. As described infra, cover **112** and/or piston plate **114** are deflectable to enable contact between cover **112** and rivet head **134** as pressure is applied to fix rivet **116** to piston plate **114**. Pressure applied to rivet **116** radially expands shaft **138** forming expanded end **139** so that end **139** is larger than hole **130** of piston plate **114**. In an example embodiment of the invention, portion **136** is a raised portion and rivet head **134** contacts cover raised portion **136** before rivet shaft **138** is expanded.

Clutch assembly **110** may include leaf spring **140**. End **141** of leaf spring **140** is connected to piston plate **114** by rivet **116** (FIG. 4). In some example embodiments of the invention, end **143** of leaf spring **140** is connected to cover **112** (FIG. 3). In an example embodiment of the invention, cover **112** includes extruded rivet **142** and leaf spring **140** is connected to cover **112** by extruded rivet **142**. In an example embodiment of the

invention, leaf spring **140** is connected to cover **112** before leaf spring **140** is connected to piston plate **114**, as described infra.

Leaf spring **140** may include a rivet head retaining portion (not shown) to retain rivet **116** in hole **144** of leaf spring **140**. The retaining portion may include a tab extending from leaf spring **140** between cover portion **136** and rivet head **134** so that head **134** is retained between leaf spring surface **146** and the tab. In an example embodiment of the invention, cover **112** is deflectable to enable contact between cover **112** and the rivet head retaining portion. In an example embodiment of the invention, piston plate **114** is deflectable to enable contact between cover **112** and the rivet head retaining portion. In an example embodiment of the invention, piston plate **114** is axially deflectable to enable rivet head **134** to contact the rivet head retaining portion (not shown) and to enable the rivet head retaining portion to contact cover **112** before rivet shaft **138** is expanded. In an example embodiment of the invention, the rivet head retaining portion is for contacting cover raised portion **136** before rivet shaft **138** is expanded as described supra.

The following description is made with reference to FIGS. 5A through 5C. FIGS. 5A through 5C illustrate a method of assembling piston plate **114** and cover **112** for clutch assembly **110**, according to an example aspect of the invention. Although the method in FIGS. 5A through 5C is described as a sequence of steps for clarity, no order should be inferred from the sequence unless explicitly stated.

A first step, as shown in FIG. 5A, assembles rivet **116** to leaf spring **140** and leaf spring **140** to cover **112**. Cover **112** is axially supported by a fixture represented by hatched area **145**. A second step, as shown in FIG. 5B, positions drive ring **120** and piston plate **114** in cover **112**. Rivet **116** is installed into piston plate hole **130**. A third step, as shown in FIG. 5C axially deflects piston **114** in direction **147** with fixture **148** so that head **134** of rivet **116** is axially clamped between the cover and the leaf spring. Expanding tool **150** is positioned adjacent to body **138** of rivet **116** and is prepared to expand body **138** into piston plate hole **130**. A fourth step (not shown) displaces tool **150** in direction **151** and expands body **138** into hole **130**.

In some embodiments of the invention, head **134** contacts cover **112** during the expansion. In an example embodiment of the invention, cover includes raised portion **136** and the head **134** contacts portion **136** during the expansion. In an example embodiment of the invention, piston plate **114** includes bore **152** and cover **112** includes pilot **154**, and the method involves the step of radially aligning piston plate bore **152** and cover pilot **154**. In an example embodiment of the invention, the method includes the step of connecting leaf spring **140** to cover **112**. In an example embodiment of the invention, leaf spring **140** includes hole **156** and the method includes the step of aligning leaf spring hole **156** to piston plate hole **130**.

The following description is made with reference to FIGS. 6-7. FIG. 6 is a front view of a clutch assembly with shimming leaf **158** installed and the piston plate removed for clarity, according to an example aspect of the invention. FIG. 7 is a section view of the clutch assembly shown in FIG. 2 taken through a piston rivet. Expanding tool **150** is positioned adjacent to body **138** of rivet **116** and is prepared to expand body **138** into piston plate hole **130**.

In some embodiments of the invention, the method includes the step of supporting rivet head **134** with shimming leaf **158**. That is, cover **112** supports shimming leaf **158** which, in turn, supports rivet head **134**. Shimming leaf **158** is rotatable about pivot **160** in directions **162** as indicated by line

5

164 and line 166 in FIG. 6. As can be seen, when shimming leaf 158 is positioned as shown by line 166, outside diameter 168 of shimming leaf assembly 170 is less than inside diameter 132 of piston plate bore 152. In an example embodiment of the invention, the method includes the step of removing shimming leaf 158 through piston plate bore 152.

FIGS. 8A-8E illustrate a method of assembling piston plate 114 and cover 112 for clutch assembly 110, according to an example aspect of the invention. Although the method in FIGS. 8A through 8E is described as a sequence of steps for clarity, no order should be inferred from the sequence unless explicitly stated.

A first step, as shown in FIG. 8A, assembles rivet 116 to leaf spring 140 and leaf spring 140 to cover 112. Cover 112 is axially supported by a fixture represented by hatched area 145. A second step, as shown in FIG. 8B, positions drive ring 120 and piston plate 114 in cover 112. Rivet 116 is installed into piston plate hole 130. In a third step, as shown in FIG. 8C, fixture 202 begins to axially deflect radially outwardly disposed portion 204 of cover 112 in direction 147. As portion 204 moves, portion 206 of the piston plate is able to shift in direction 147 to track the displacement of portion 204. As part of the third step, fixture 148 is brought into contact with piston plate 114 and begins displacing the piston plate in direction 147. In one embodiment, the piston plate displaces in direction 147 without bending. In one embodiment, the piston plate bends as the plate is displaced in direction 147. In a fourth step, as shown in FIG. 8D, fixtures 202 and 148 continue displacing portion 204 and the piston plate, respectively, in direction 147 so that head 134 of rivet 116 is clamped between the cover and the leaf spring. Expanding tool 150 is positioned adjacent to body 138 of rivet 116 and is prepared to expand body 138 into piston plate hole 130. In one embodiment, the piston plate continues displacing in direction 147 without bending. In one embodiment, the piston plate bends as the plate is further displaced in direction 147. A fifth step, as shown in FIG. 8E, displaces tool 150 in direction 147 and expands body 138 into hole 130. After the body is expanded, fixtures 202 and 148 are displaced in direction 208.

Thus, the method shown in FIGS. 8A through 8E results in little or no bending of the piston plate during a riveting operation; or reduces the amount of bending of the piston plate during a riveting operation, for example, reducing the amount of bending of the piston plate associated with the method shown in FIGS. 5A through 5C.

In some embodiments of the invention, head 134 is clamped between cover 112 and the leaf spring during the expansion. In an example embodiment of the invention, the cover includes raised portion 136 and the head 134 is clamped between portion 136 and the leaf spring during the expansion. In an example embodiment of the invention, piston plate 114 includes bore 152 and cover 112 includes pilot 154, and the method involves the step of radially aligning piston plate bore 152 and cover pilot 154. In an example embodiment of the invention, the method includes the step of connecting leaf spring 140 to cover 112. In an example embodiment of the invention, leaf spring 140 includes hole 156 and the method includes the step of aligning leaf spring hole 156 to piston plate hole 130.

FIG. 9 is a section view of clutch assembly 300 taken through a piston plate rivet. Clutch assembly 300 is a portion of torque converter 302. The torque converter includes pump 304, turbine 306, and stator 308, as is commonly known in the art. Clutch assembly 300 includes cover 112, piston plate 114,

6

and rivet 116. Cover 112 is drivably engagable to a prime mover, such as a vehicle engine, through drive plate 118, for example.

Clutch assembly 300 includes drive ring 310, drivably connected with cover 112, drive ring 312 drivably connected to damper assembly 314, and friction rings 316. The friction rings can be disposed on or between rings 310 and 312 and plate 114. The damper is drivably connected with an input shaft (not shown) of a vehicle transmission so that, when clutch assembly 300 is engaged, driving torque is transferred from the prime mover, through the clutch, and into the transmission.

Piston plate 114 includes hole 130. Rivet 116 is disposed in hole 130. Head 134 of rivet 116 is proximate portion 136 of cover 112. Portion 136 may be a portion of radial wall 137 of cover 112. As described infra, cover 112 is deflectable and/or piston plate 114 is displaceable to enable contact between cover 112 and rivet head 134 as pressure is applied to fix rivet 116 to piston plate 114. Pressure applied to rivet 116 radially expands shaft 138 forming expanded end 139 so that end 139 is larger than hole 130 of piston plate 116. In an example embodiment of the invention (not shown), portion 136 is a raised portion and rivet head 134 contacts cover raised portion 136 before rivet shaft 138 is expanded.

Clutch assembly 300 includes leaf spring 140. In one embodiment, leaf spring 140 is connected to piston plate 114 by rivet 116. In some example embodiments of the invention, leaf spring 140 is connected to cover 112, for example, as shown in FIG. 3. In an example embodiment of the invention, for example, as shown in FIG. 3, cover 112 includes an extruded rivet and leaf spring 140 is connected to cover 112 by the extruded rivet. In an example embodiment of the invention, leaf spring 140 is connected to cover 112 before leaf spring 140 is connected to piston plate 114.

In one embodiment (not shown), leaf spring 140 includes a rivet head retaining portion to retain rivet 116 in hole 144 of leaf spring 140. The retaining portion may include a tab extending from leaf spring 140 between cover portion 136 and rivet head 134 so that head 134 is retained between leaf spring surface 146 and the tab. In an example embodiment of the invention, cover 112 is deflectable to enable contact between cover 112 and the rivet head retaining portion. In an example embodiment of the invention, piston plate 114 is displaceable to enable contact between cover 112 and the rivet head retaining portion. In an example embodiment of the invention, piston plate 114 is axially displaceable to enable rivet head 134 to contact the rivet head retaining portion and to enable the rivet head retaining portion to contact cover 112 before rivet shaft 138 is expanded. In an example embodiment of the invention, the rivet head retaining portion is for contacting cover raised portion 136 before rivet shaft 138 is expanded as described supra.

Although clutch assembly 300 is shown connecting cover 112 to piston plate 114 with a particular number of leaf springs 140, assembly 300 may include other numbers of leaf springs 140. Furthermore, although specific piston plate attachments are shown, other components including drive plates, cover plates, and sealing plates may be attached to piston plate 114, and such attachments are within the scope of the invention.

Of course, changes and modifications to the above examples of the invention should be readily apparent to those having ordinary skill in the art, without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as claimed. Although the invention is described by reference to specific preferred and/

7

or example embodiments, it is clear that variations can be made without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention as claimed.

What we claim is:

1. A method of assembling a piston plate and cover for a torque converter comprising:

installing a rivet comprising a rivet head and a rivet body into a hole in the piston plate;

clamping the rivet head between the piston plate and the cover; and,

expanding the rivet body into the piston plate hole, wherein clamping the rivet head further comprises axially deflecting the piston plate or the cover.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising connecting a leaf spring to the piston plate using the rivet.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein axially deflecting the cover so that the rivet head is clamped between the cover and the piston plate includes:

displacing a first portion of the cover in a first direction; and,

8

in response to displacing the first portion, displacing the piston plate in the first direction, wherein the first portion is axially aligned with an outer circumference of the piston plate.

4. A method of assembling a piston plate and cover for a torque converter comprising:

fastening a first end of a leaf spring to the cover with a first rivet extruded from the cover;

installing a second rivet comprising a rivet head and a rivet body into a piston plate hole, located in a first portion of the piston plate, and a second end of the leaf spring;

displacing a radially outermost portion of the cover in a first axial direction;

shifting a radially outermost portion of the piston plate in the first axial direction;

axially displacing the first portion of the piston plate and the radially outermost portion of the cover in the first axial direction so that the rivet head is clamped between the cover and the piston plate; and

expanding the rivet body into the piston plate hole.

* * * * *