US006488363B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Torgerson et al.

(10) **Patent No.: US 6,488,363 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent: Dec. 3, 2002**

(54) **ENERGY BALANCED PRINTHEAD DESIGN**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **10/022,985**

(22) Filed: **Dec. 17, 2001**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2002/0140779 A1 Oct. 3, 2002

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 09/773,180, filed on Jan. 30, 2001, now Pat. No. 6,412,917.

(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **B41J 2/05**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **347/58**; 347/59
(58) **Field of Search** 347/57–59, 63, 347/65; 257/342, 920

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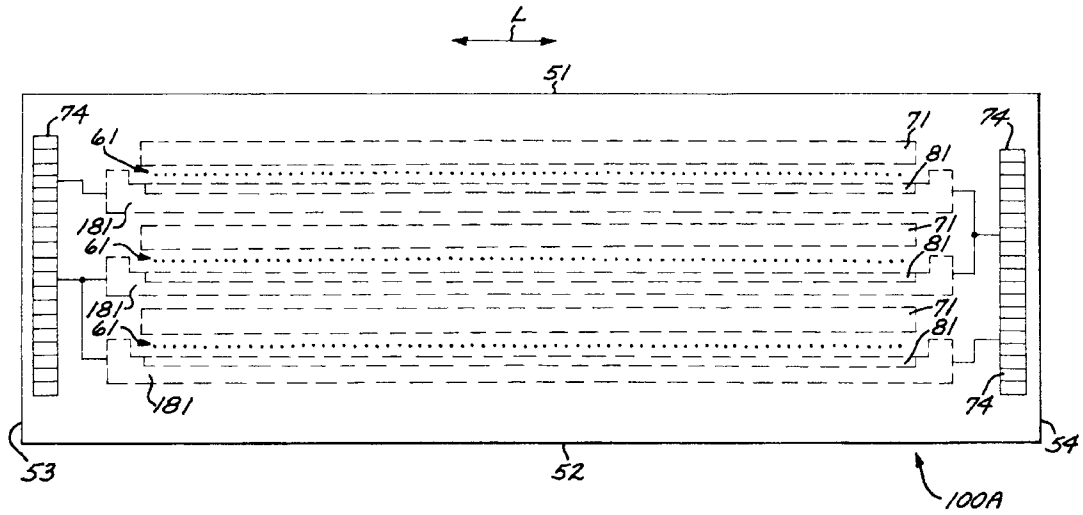
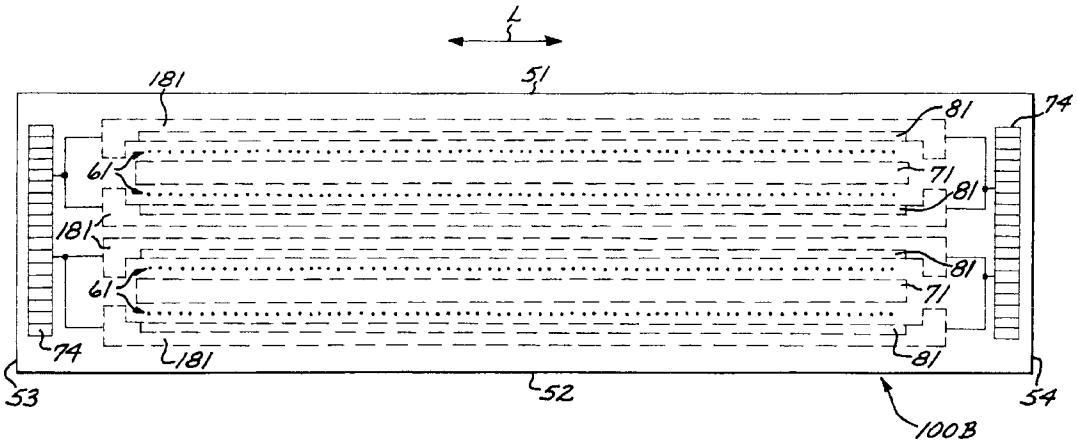
Primary Examiner—John Barlow
Assistant Examiner—Juanita Stephens

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A narrow ink jet printhead having efficient FET drive circuits that are configured to compensate for parasitic resistances of power traces. The ink jet printhead further includes ground busses that overlap active regions of the FET drive circuits.

29 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets





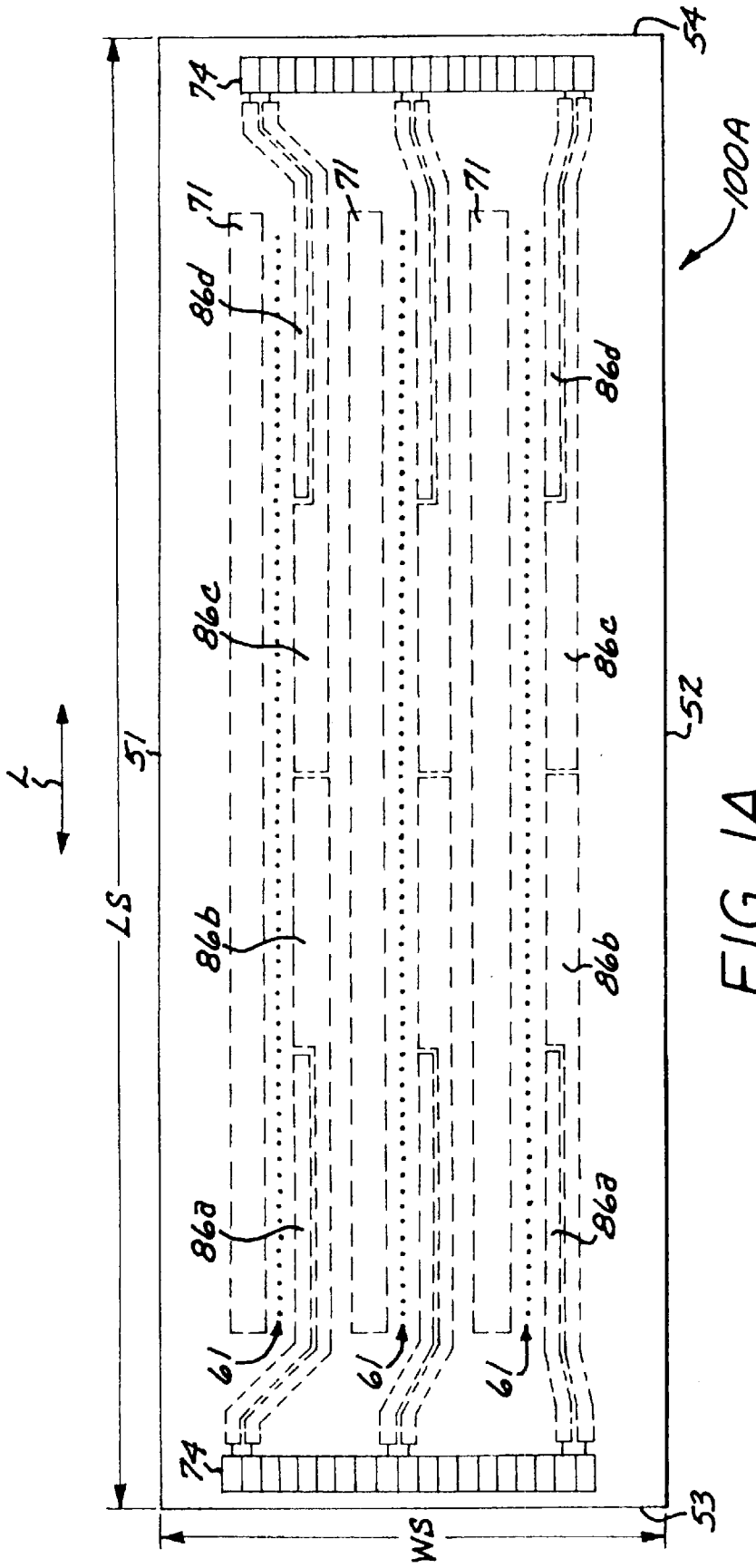

54
74
71
71
71
100A
86d
86d
86c
86c
52
51
L
LS
86b
86b
86a
86a
61
61
61
74
53
WS

FIG. 1A

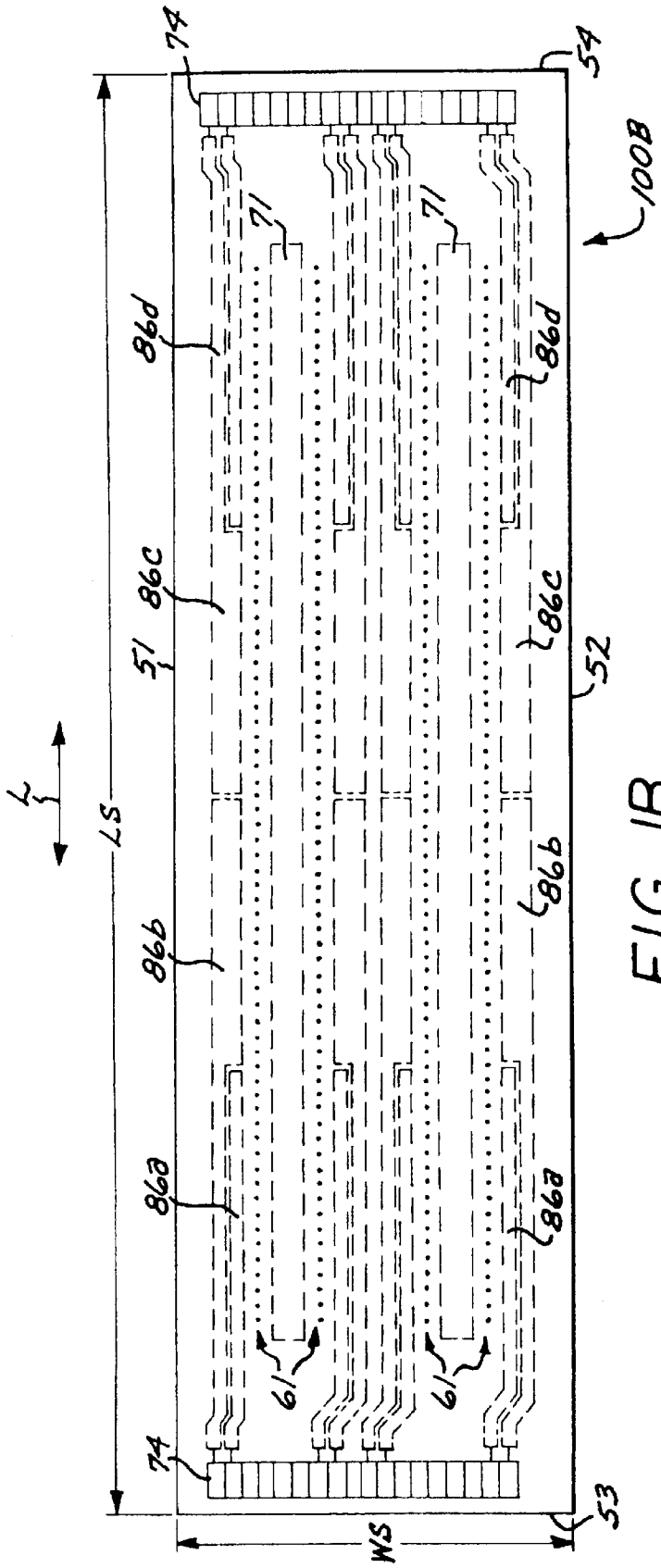

74
54
100B
71
71
86d
86d
86c
86c
51
52
LS
86b
86b
86a
86a
61
61
74
53
WS

FIG. 1B

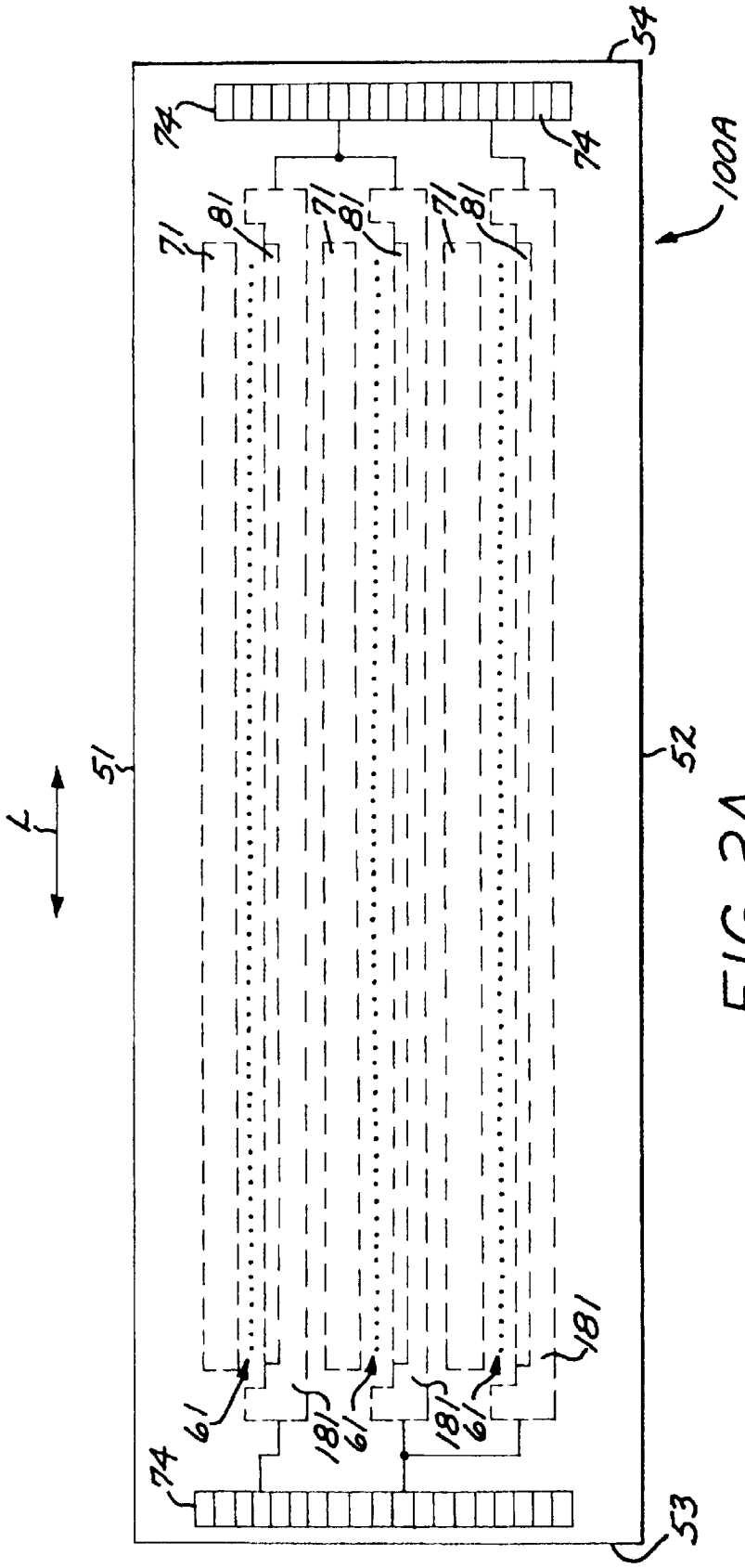


FIG. 2A

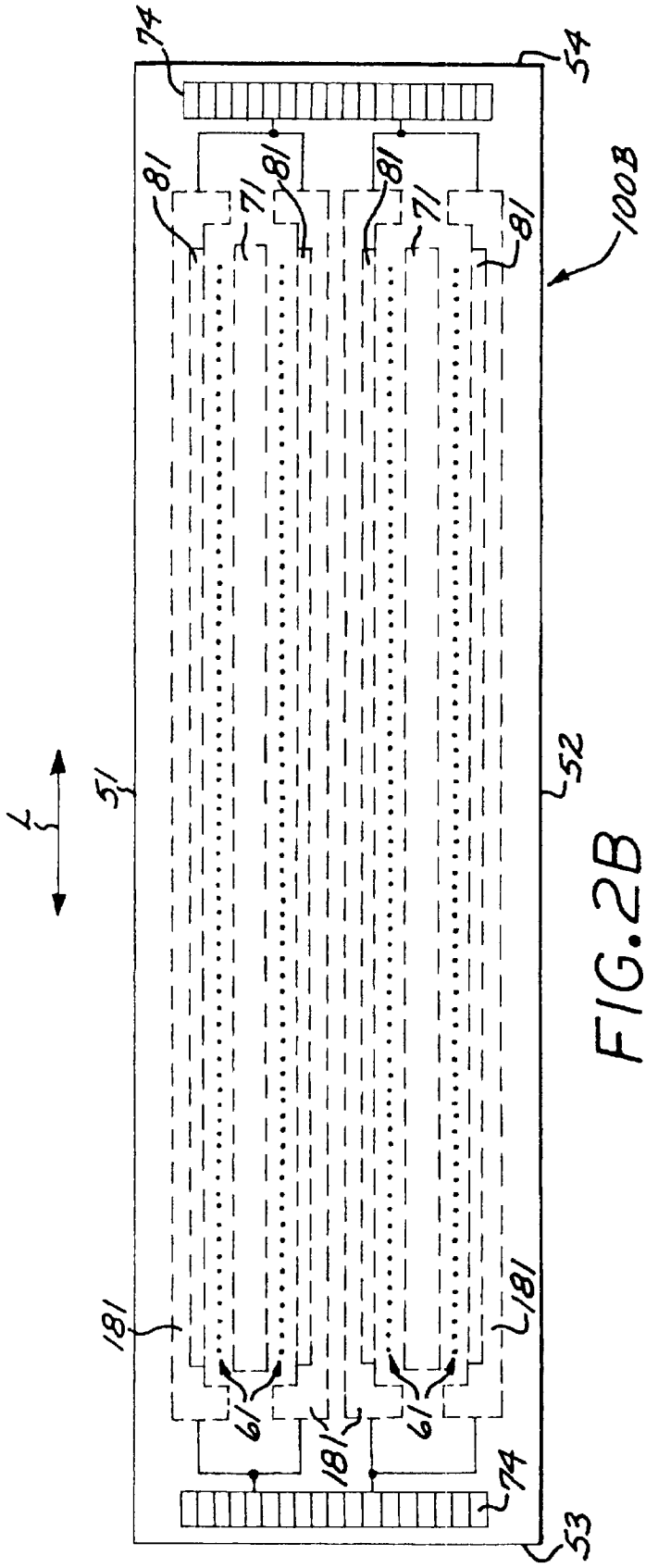


FIG. 2B

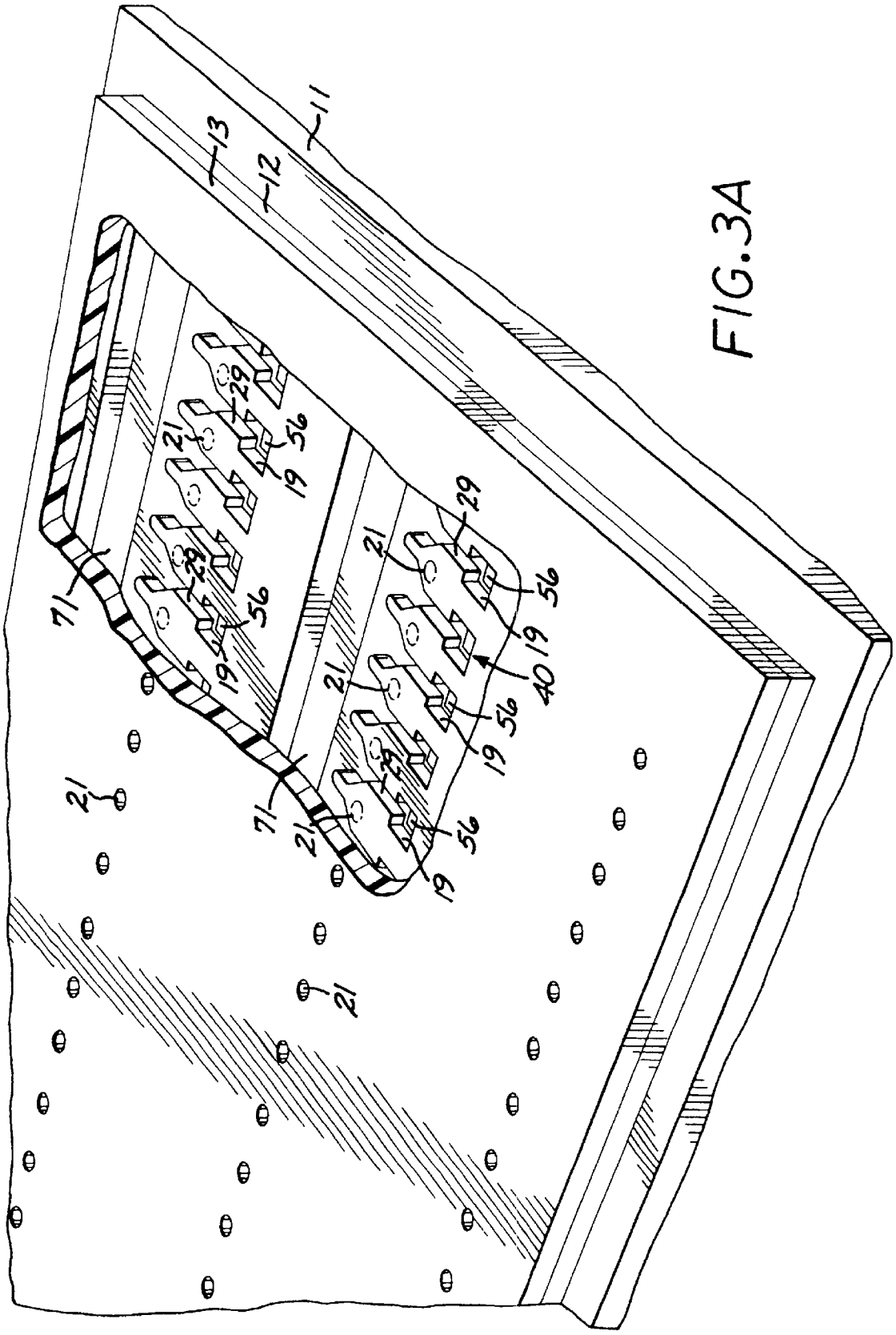


FIG. 3A

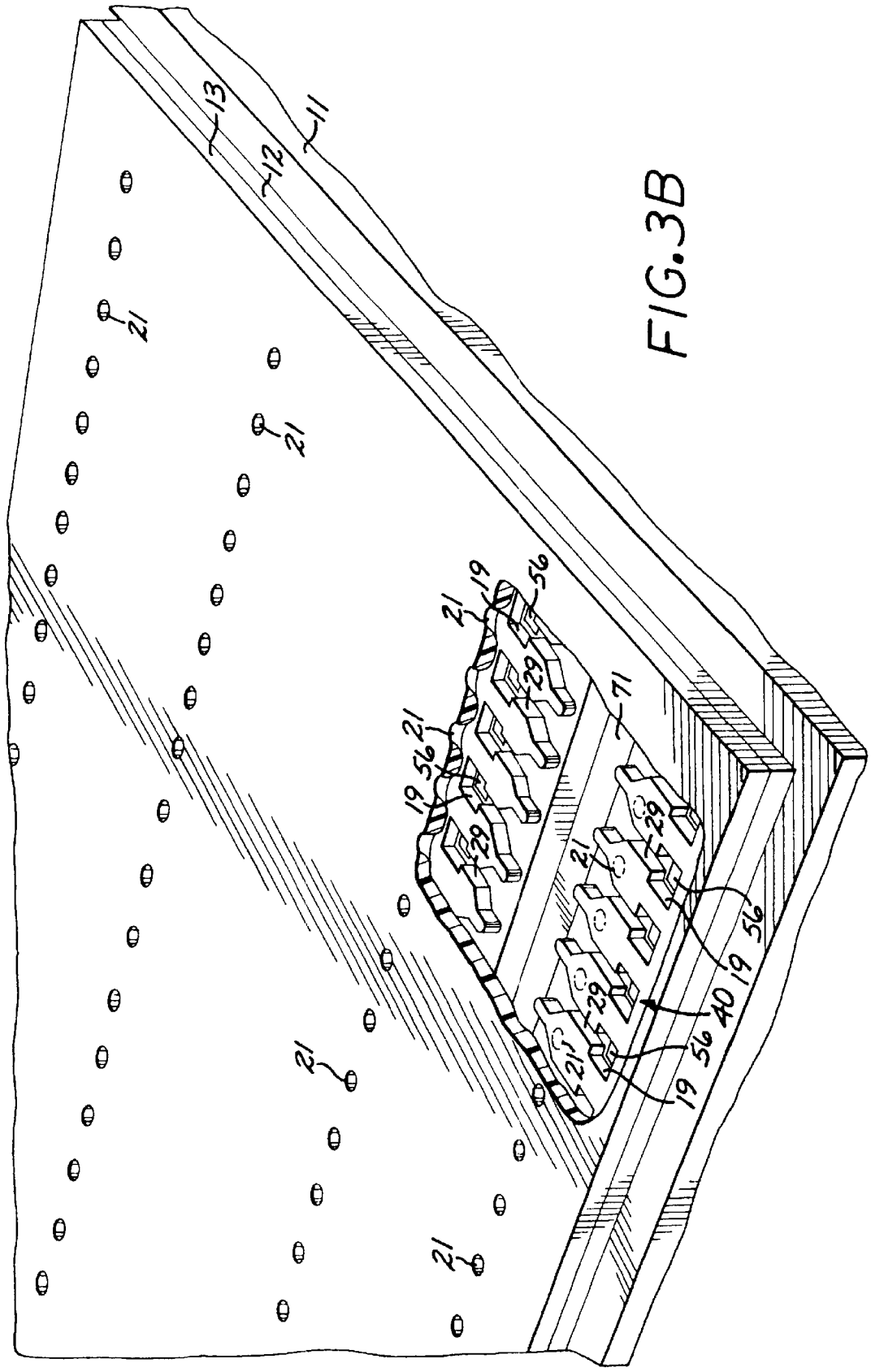

13
11
12
21
21
21
19
56
29
71
21
56
19
29
21
29
56
19
40
29
56
21
19
21
21

FIG. 3B

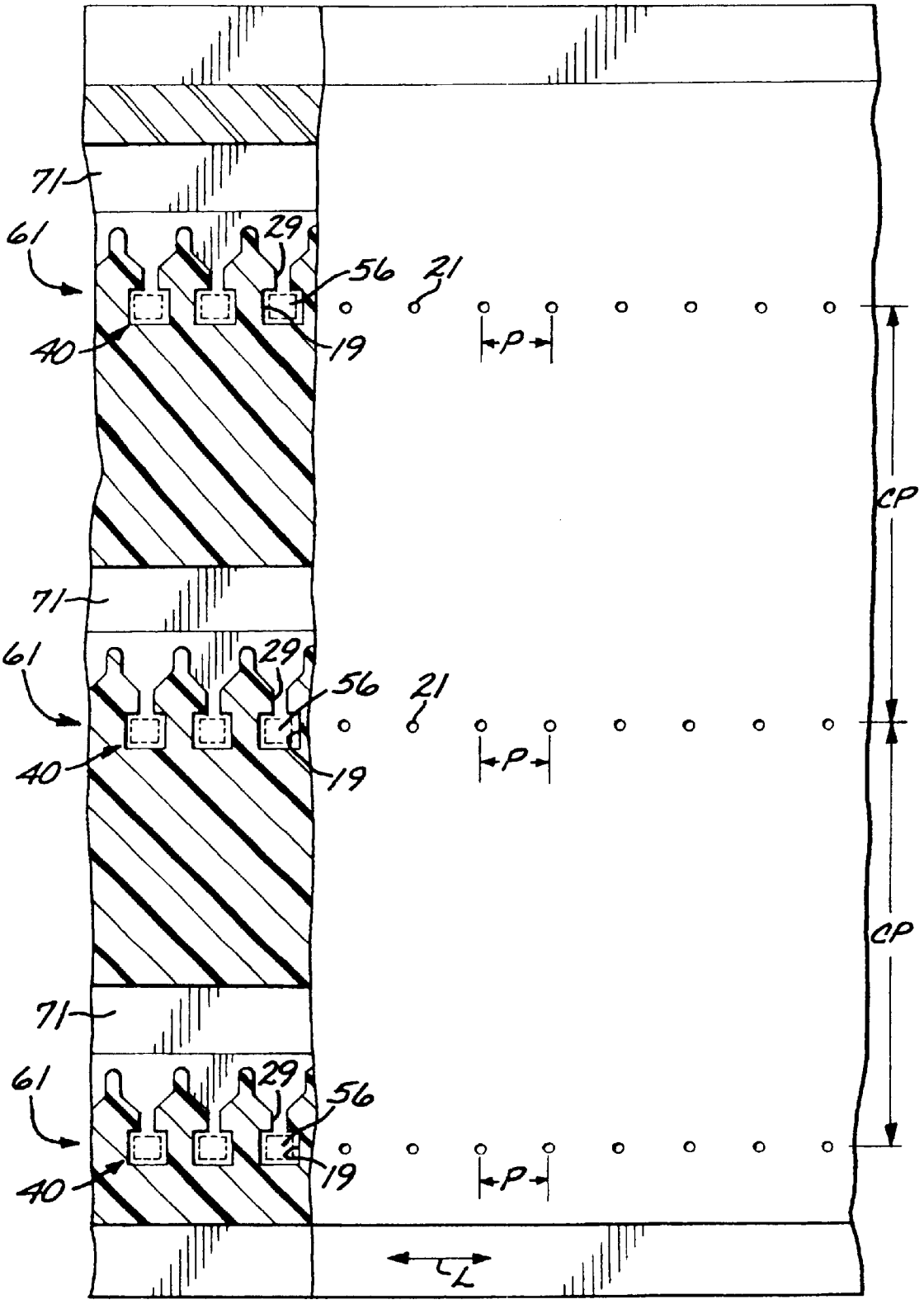


FIG.4A

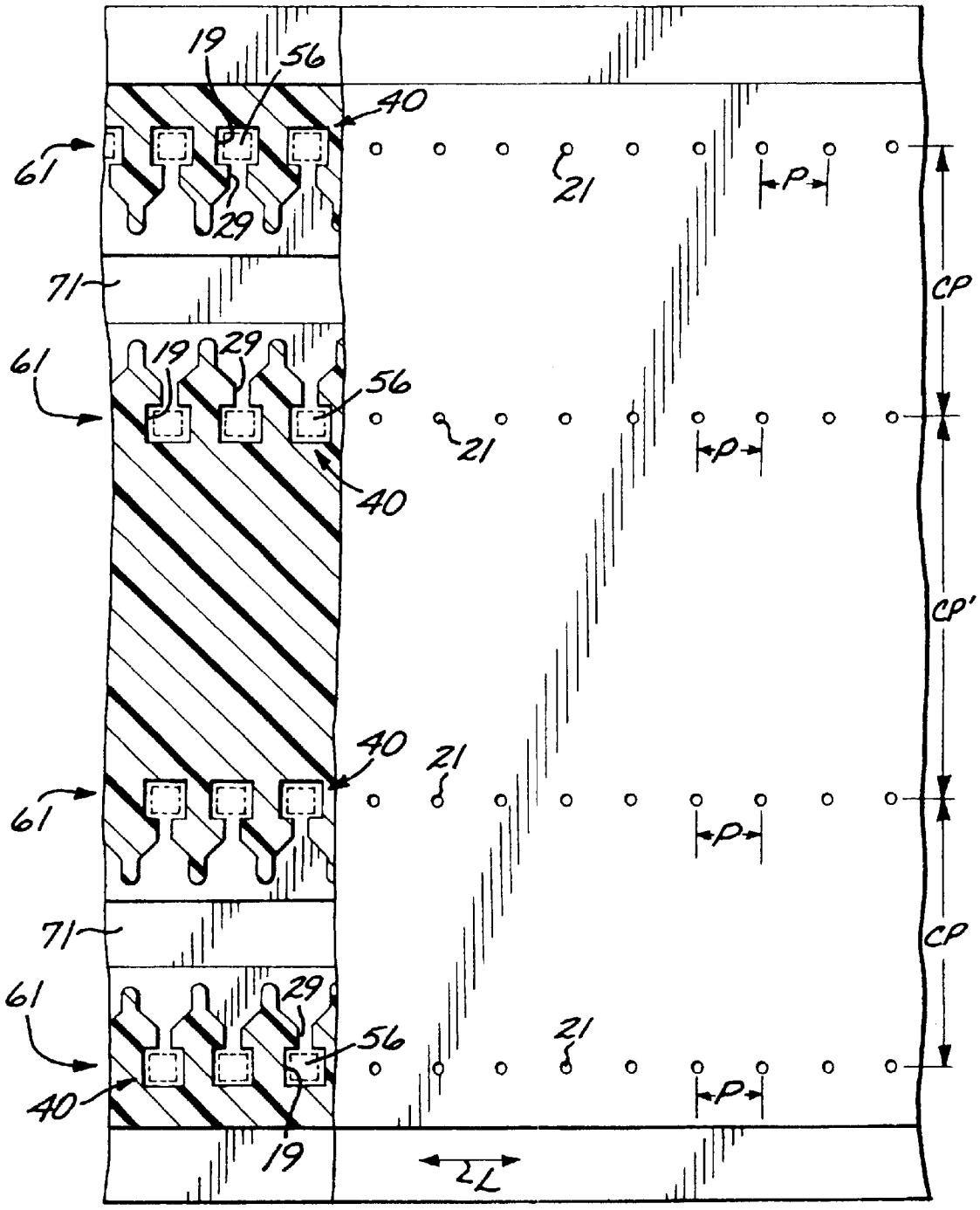

19
56
40
61
29
21
P
71
CP
61
19
29
56
21
P
40
CP'
40
21
61
P
71
CP
61
29
56
21
40
P
19
2L

FIG. 4B

FIG.5

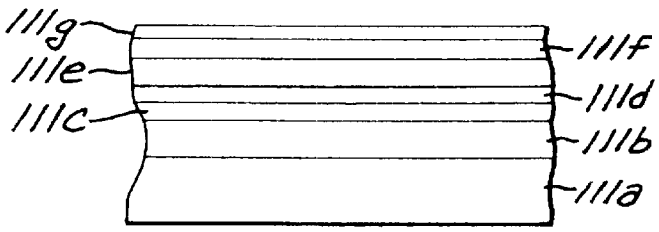


FIG.8

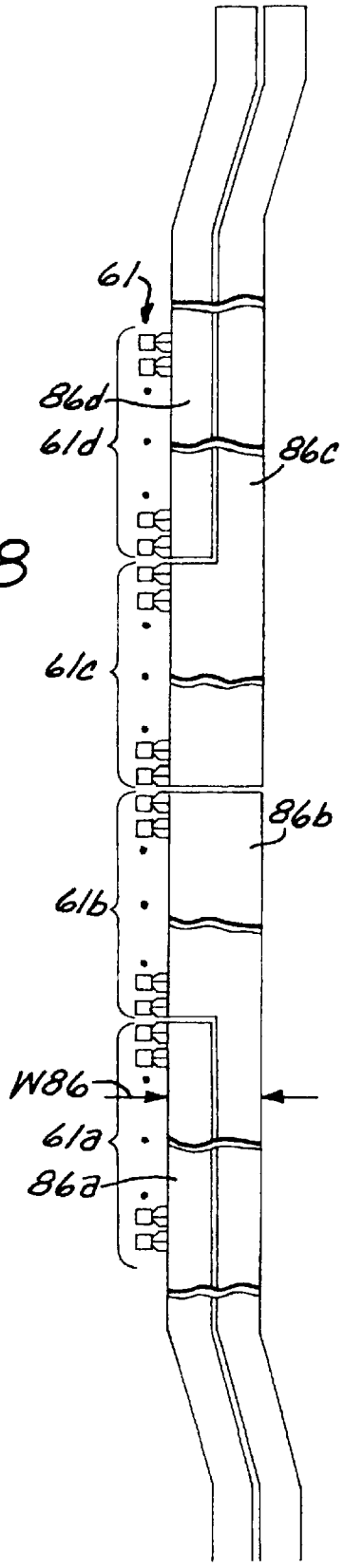
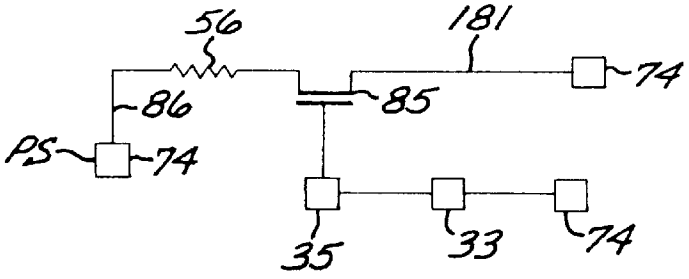


FIG.7



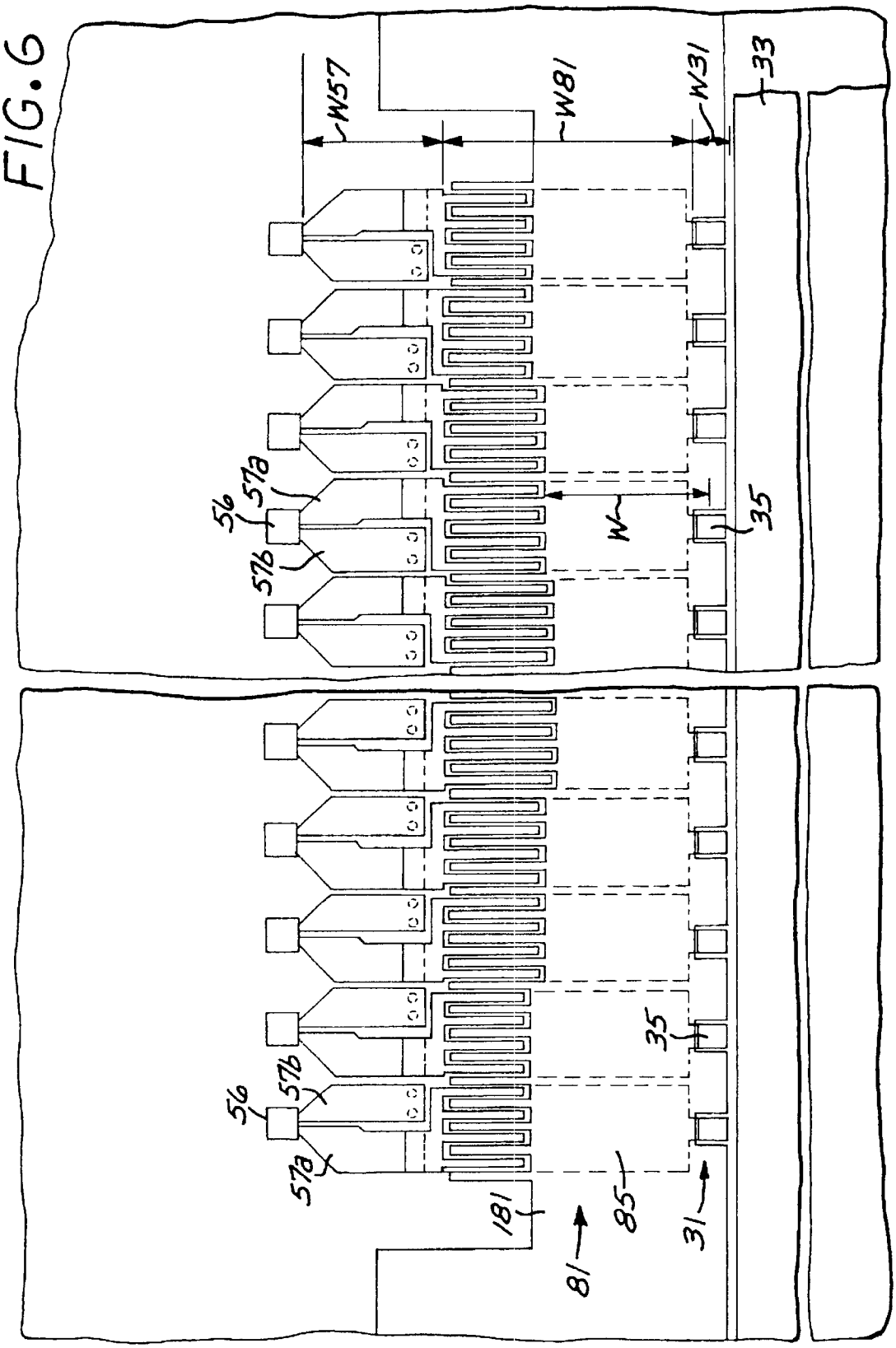


FIG. 6

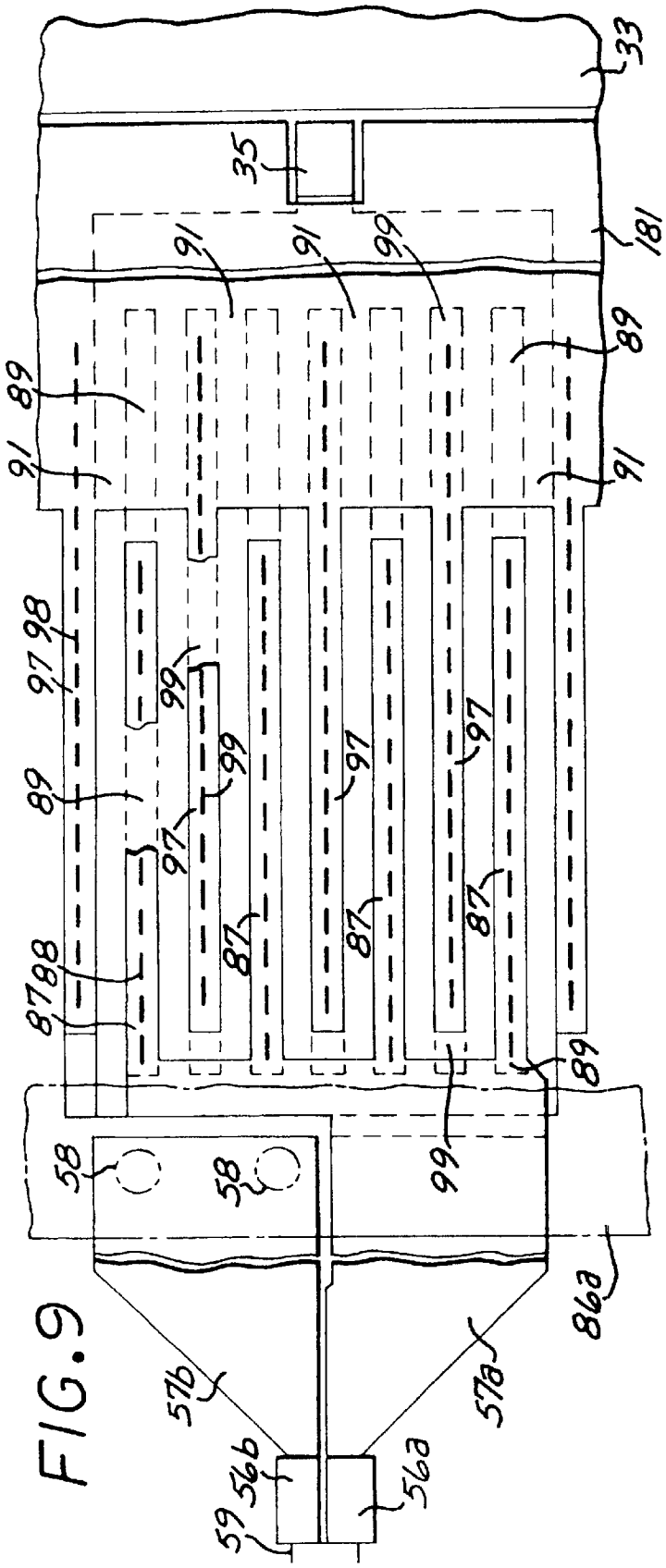

33
35
181
91
99
89
97
98
87
88
58
86a
57b
57a
56b
56a
59

FIG. 9

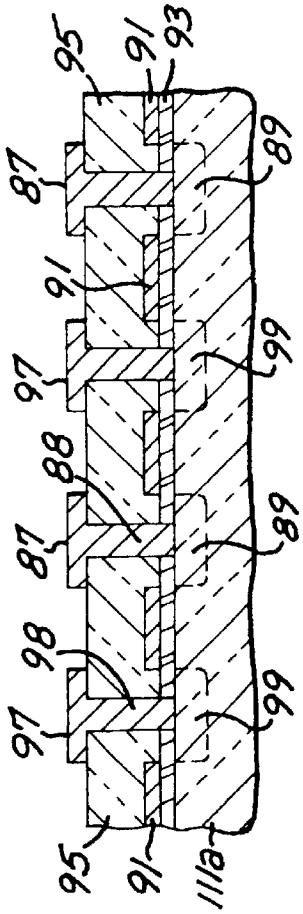
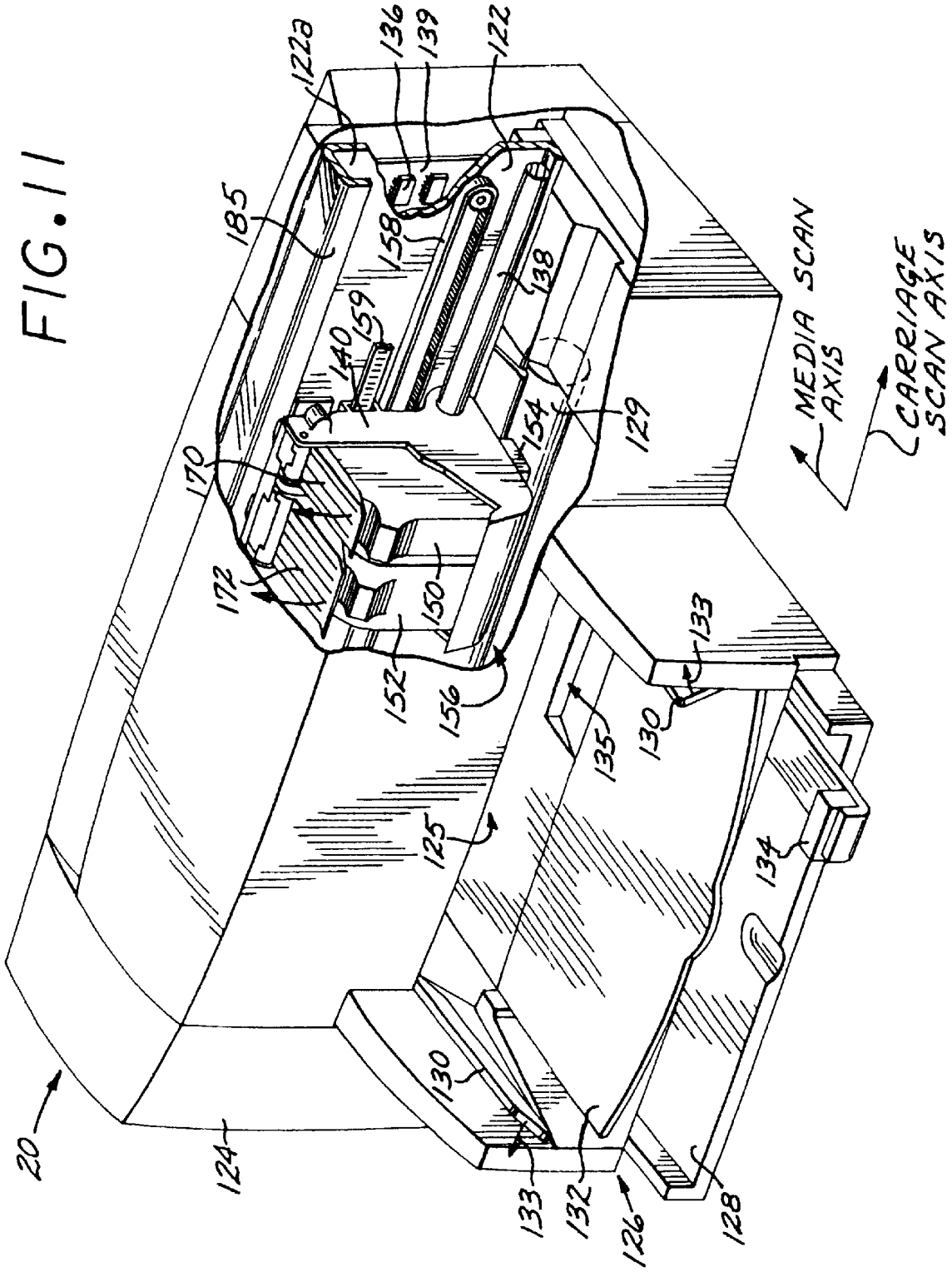

95
91
93
87
89
97
99
88
98
111a

FIG. 10

FIG. 11


122a
136
139
122
185
158
138
159
140
154
129
170
172
150
152
156
133
130
135
125
134
20
124
130
133
132
126
128
MEDIA SCAN AXIS
CARRIAGE SCAN AXIS

ENERGY BALANCED PRINTHEAD DESIGN

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

This is a continuation of application Ser. No. 09/773,180 filed on Jan 30, 2001, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,412,917 B1 which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The subject invention generally relates to ink jet printing, and more particularly to a thin film ink jet printhead having FET drive circuits configured to compensate for parasitic resistances of power traces.

The art of ink jet printing is relatively well developed. Commercial products such as computer printers, graphics plotters, and facsimile machines have been implemented with ink jet technology for producing printed media. The contributions of Hewlett-Packard Company to ink jet technology are described, for example, in various articles in the *Hewlett-Packard Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 5 (May 1985); Vol. 39, No. 5 (October 1988); Vol. 43, No. 4 (August 1992); Vol. 43, No. 6 (December 1992); and Vol. 45, No. 1 (February 1994); all incorporated herein by reference.

Generally, an ink jet image is formed pursuant to precise placement on a print medium of ink drops emitted by an ink drop generating device known as an ink jet printhead. Typically, an ink jet printhead is supported on a movable print carriage that traverses over the surface of the print medium and is controlled to eject drops of ink at appropriate times pursuant to command of a microcomputer or other controller, wherein the timing of the application of the ink drops is intended to correspond to a pattern of pixels of the image being printed.

A typical Hewlett-Packard ink jet printhead includes an array of precisely formed nozzles in an orifice plate that is attached to an ink barrier layer which in turn is attached to a thin film substructure that implements ink firing heater resistors and apparatus for enabling the resistors. The ink barrier layer defines ink channels including ink chambers disposed over associated ink firing resistors, and the nozzles in the orifice plate are aligned with associated ink chambers. Ink drop generator regions are formed by the ink chambers and portions of the thin film substructure and the orifice plate that are adjacent the ink chambers.

The thin film substructure is typically comprised of a substrate such as silicon on which are formed various thin film layers that form thin film ink firing resistors, apparatus for enabling the resistors, and also interconnections to bonding pads that are provided for external electrical connections to the printhead. The ink barrier layer is typically a polymer material that is laminated as a dry film to the thin film substructure, and is designed to be photodefinable and both UV and thermally curable. In an ink jet printhead of a slot feed design, ink is fed from one or more ink reservoirs to the various ink chambers through one or more ink feed slots formed in the substrate.

An example of the physical arrangement of the orifice plate, ink barrier layer, and thin film substructure is illustrated at page 44 of the *Hewlett-Packard Journal* of February 1994, cited above. Further examples of ink jet printheads are set forth in commonly assigned U.S. Pat. No. 4,719,477 and U.S. Pat. No. 5,317,346, both of which are incorporated herein by reference.

Considerations with thin film ink jet printheads include increased substrate size and/or substrate fragility as more ink drop generators and/or ink feed slots are employed. There is accordingly a need for an ink jet printhead that is compact and has a large number of ink drop generators.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The disclosed invention is directed to an ink jet printhead having efficient heater resistor energizing FET drive circuits that are configured to compensate for variations in parasitic resistances of power traces.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The advantages and features of the disclosed invention will readily be appreciated by persons skilled in the art from the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the drawing wherein:

FIG. **1**A is an unscaled schematic top plan view illustration of the layout of ink drop generators and primitive select of an ink jet printhead that employs the invention.

FIG. **1**B is an unscaled schematic top plan view illustration of the layout of ink drop generators and primitive select of an ink jet printhead that employs the invention.

FIG. **2**A is an unscaled schematic top plan view illustration of the layout of ink drop generators and ground busses of the ink jet printhead of FIG. **1**A.

FIG. **2**B is an unscaled schematic top plan view illustration of the layout of ink drop generators and ground busses of the ink jet printhead of FIG. **1**B.

FIG. **3**A is a schematic, partially broken away perspective view of the ink jet printhead of FIG. **1**A.

FIG. **3**B is a schematic, partially broken away perspective view of the ink jet printhead of FIG. **1**B.

FIG. **4**A is an unscaled schematic partial top plan illustration of the ink jet printhead of FIG. **1**A.

FIG. **4**B is an unscaled schematic partial top plan illustration of the ink jet printhead of FIG. **1**B.

FIG. **5** is a schematic depiction of generalized layers of the thin film substructure of the printheads of FIGS. **1**A and **1**B.

FIG. **6** is a partial top plan view generally illustrating the layout of a representatve FET drive circuit array and a ground bus of the printheads of FIGS. **1**A and **1**B.

FIG. **7** is an electrical circuit schematic depicting the electrical connections of a heater resistor and an PET drive circuit of the printheads of FIGS. **1**A and **1**B.

FIG. **8** is a schematic plan view of representative primitive select traces of the printheads of FIGS. **1**A and **1**B.

FIG. **9** is a schematic plan view of an illustrative implementation of an FET drive circuit and a ground bus of the printheads of FIGS. **1**A and **1**B.

FIG. **10** is a schematic elevational cross sectional view of the FET drive circuit of FIG. **9**.

FIG. **11** is an unscaled schematic perspective view of a printer in which the printhead of the invention can be employed.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DISCLOSURE

In the following detailed description and in the several figures of the drawing, like elements are identified with like reference numerals.

Referring now to FIGS. **1**A–**4**A, and **1**B–**4**B, schematically illustrated therein are unscaled schematic plan views and perspective views of ink jet printheads **100**A, **100**B in

which the invention can be employed and which generally includes (a) a thin film substructure or die **11** comprising a substrate such as silicon and having various thin film layers formed thereon, (b) an ink barrier layer **12** disposed on the thin film substructure **11**, and (c) an orifice or nozzle plate **13** laminarly attached to the top of the ink barrier **12**.

The thin film substructure **11** comprises an integrated circuit die that is formed for example pursuant to conventional integrated circuit techniques, and as schematically depicted in FIG. **5** generally includes a silicon substrate **111***a*, an FET gate and dielectric layer **111***b*, a resistor layer **111***c*, and a first metallization layer **111***d*. Active devices such as drive FET circuits described more particularly herein are formed in the top portion of the silicon substrate **111***a* and the FET gate and dielectric layer **111***b*, which includes a gate oxide layer, polysilicon gates, and a dielectric layer adjacent the resistor layer **111***c*. Thin film heater resistors **56** are formed by the respective patterning of the resistor layer **111***c* and the first metallization layer **111***d*. The thin film substructure further includes a composite passivation layer **111***e* comprising for example a silicon nitride layer and a silicon carbide layer, and a tantalum mechanical passivation layer **111***f* that overlies at least the heater resistors **56**. A gold conductive layer **111***g* overlies the tantalum layer **111***f*.

The ink barrier layer **12** is formed of a dry film that is heat and pressure laminated to the thin film substructure **11** and photodefined to form therein ink chambers **19** disposed over heater resistors **56** and ink channels **29**. Gold bonding pads **74** engagable for external electrical connections are formed in the gold layer at longitudinally spaced apart, opposite ends of the thin film substructure **11** and are not covered by the ink barrier layer **12**. By way of illustrative example, the barrier layer material comprises an acrylate based photopolymer dry film such as the "Parad" brand photopolymer dry film obtainable from E.I. duPont de Nemours and Company of Wilmington, Del. Similar dry films include other duPont products such as the "Riston" brand dry film and dry films made by other chemical providers. The orifice plate **13** comprises, for example, a planar substrate comprised of a polymer material and in which the orifices are formed by laser ablation, for example as disclosed in commonly assigned U.S. Pat. No. 5,469,199, incorporated herein by reference. The orifice plate can also comprise a plated metal such as nickel.

As depicted in FIGS. **3**A and **3**B, the ink chambers **19** in the ink barrier layer **12** are more particularly disposed over respective ink firing heater resistors **56**, and each ink chamber **19** is defined by interconnected edges or walls of a chamber opening formed in the barrier layer **12**. The ink channels **29** are defined by further openings formed in the barrier layer **12**, and are integrally joined to respective ink firing chambers **19**. The ink channels **29** open towards a feed edge of an adjacent ink feed slot **71** and receive ink from such ink feed slot.

The orifice plate **13** includes orifices or nozzles **21** disposed over respective ink chambers **19**, such that each ink firing heater resistor **56**, an associated ink chamber **19**, and an associated orifice **21** are aligned and form an ink drop generator **40**. Each of the heater resistors has a nominal resistance of at least 100 ohms, for example about 120 or 130 ohms, and can comprise a segmented resistor as shown in FIG. **9**, wherein a heater resistor **56** is comprised of two resistor regions **56***a*, **56***b* connected by a metallization region **59**. This resistor structure provides for a resistance that is greater than a single resistor region of the same area.

While the disclosed printheads are described as having a barrier layer and a separate orifice plate, it should be appreciated that the printheads can be implemented with an integral barrier/orifice structure that can be made, for example, using a single photopolymer layer that is exposed with a multiple exposure process and then developed.

The ink drop generators **40** are arranged in columnar arrays or groups **61** that extend along a reference axis L and are spaced apart from each other laterally or transversely relative to the reference axis L. The heater resistors **56** of each ink drop generator group are generally aligned with the reference axis L and have a predetermined center to center spacing or nozzle pitch P along the reference axis L. The nozzle pitch P can be 1/600 inch or greater, such as 1/300 inch. Each columnar array **61** of ink drop generators includes for example 100 or more ink drop generators (i.e., at least 100 ink drop generators).

By way of illustrative example, the thin film substructure **11** can be rectangular, wherein opposite edges **51**, **52** thereof are longitudinal edges of a length dimension LS while longitudinally spaced apart, opposite edges **53**, **54** are of a width or lateral dimension WS that is less than the length LS of the thin film substructure **11**. The longitudinal extent of the thin film substructure **11** is along the edges **51**, **52** which can be parallel to the reference axis L. In use, the reference axis L can be aligned with what is generally referred to as the media advance axis. For convenience, the longitudinally separated ends of the thin film substructure will also be referred to by the reference number **53**, **54** used to refer to the edges at such ends.

While the ink drop generators **40** of each columnar array **61** of ink drop generators are illustrated as being substantially collinear, it should be appreciated that some of the ink drop generators **40** of an array of ink drop generators can be slightly off the center line of the column, for example to compensate for firing delays.

Insofar as each of the ink drop generators **40** includes a heater resistor **56**, the heater resistors are accordingly arranged in columnar groups or arrays that correspond to the columnar arrays of ink drop generators. For convenience, the heater resistor arrays or groups will be referred to by the same reference number **61**.

The thin film substructure **11** of the printhead **100**A of FIGS. **1**A, **2**A, **3**A, **4**A more particularly includes three ink feed slots **71** that are aligned with the reference axis L, and are spaced apart from each other transversely relative to a reference axis L. The ink feed slots **71** respectively feed three ink drop generator groups **61**, and by way of illustrative example are located on the same side of the ink drop generator groups that they respectively feed. In this manner, each of the ink feed slots **71** feeds ink along a single feed edge. By way of specific example, each of the ink feed slots provides ink of a color that is different from the color of the ink provided by the other ink feed slots, such as cyan, yellow and magenta.

The thin film substructure **11** of the printhead **100**B of FIGS. **1**B, **2**B, **3**B, **4**B more particularly includes two ink feed slots **71** that are aligned with the reference axis L, and are spaced apart from each other transversely relative to the reference axis L. The ink feed slots **71** respectively feed four columns **61** of ink drop generators respectively located on opposite sides of the two ink feed slots **71**, wherein the ink channels open towards an edge formed by an associated ink feed slot in the thin film substructure. In this manner, opposite edges of each ink feed slot forms a feed edge and each of the two ink feed slots comprises a dual edge ink feeding slot. By way of specific implementation, the printhead **100**B of FIGS. **1**B, **2**B, **3**B, **4**B is a monochrome

printhead wherein both ink feed slots **71** provides ink of the same color such as black, such that all four columns **61** of ink drop generators produce ink drops of the same color.

Respectively adjacent and associated with the columnar arrays **61** of ink drop generators **40** are columnar FET drive circuit arrays **81** formed in the thin film substructure **11** of the printheads **100**A, **100**B, as schematically depicted in FIG. **6** for a representative columnar array **61** of ink drop generators. Each FET drive circuit array **81** includes a plurality of FET drive circuits **85** having drain electrodes respectively connected to respective heater resistors **56** by heater resistor leads **57***a*. Associated with each FET drive circuit array **81** and the associated array of ink drop generators is a columnar ground bus **181** to which the source electrodes of all of the FET drive circuits **85** of the associated FET drive circuit array **81** are electrically connected. Each columnar array **81** of FET drive circuits and the associated ground bus **181** extend longitudinally along the associated columnar array **61** of ink drop generators, and are at least longitudinally co-extensive with the associated columnar array **61**. Each ground bus **181** is electrically connected to at least one bond pad **74** at one end of the printhead structure and to at least one bond pad **74** at the other end of the printhead structure as schematically depicted in FIGS. **1**A and **1**B.

The ground busses **181** and heater resistor leads **57***a* are formed in the metallization layer **111***d* (FIG. **5**) of the thin film substructure **11**, as are the heater resistor leads **57***b*, and the drain and source electrodes of the FET drive circuits **85** described further herein.

The FET drive circuits **85** of each columnar array of FET drive circuits are controlled by an associated columnar array **31** of decoder logic circuits **35** that decode address information on an adjacent address bus **33** that is connected to appropriate bond pads **74** (FIG. **6**). The address information identifies the ink drop generators that are to be energized with ink firing energy, as discussed further herein, and is utilized by the decoder logic circuits **35** to turn on the FET drive circuit of an addressed or selected ink drop generator.

As schematically depicted in FIG. **7**, one terminal of each heater resistor **56** is connected via a primitive select trace to a bond pad **74** that receives an ink firing primitive select signal PS. In this manner, since the other terminal of each heater resistor **56** is connected to the drain terminal of an associated FET drive circuit **85**, ink firing energy PS is provided to the heater resistor **56** if the associated FET drive circuit is ON as controlled by the associated decoder logic circuit **35**.

As schematically depicted in FIG. **8** for a representative columnar array **61** of ink drop generators, the ink drop generators of a columnar array **61** of ink drop generators can be organized into four primitive groups **61***a*, **61***b*, **61***c*, **61***d* of contiguously adjacent ink drop generators, and the heater resistors **56** of a particular primitive group are electrically connected to the same one of four primitive select traces **86***a*, **86***b*, **86***c*, **86***d*, such that the ink drop generators of a particular primitive group are switchably coupled in parallel to the same ink firing primitive select signal PS. For the specific example wherein the number N of ink drop generators in a columnar array is an integral multiple of 4, each primitive group includes N/4 ink drop generators. For reference, the primitive groups **61***a*, **61***b*, **61***c*, **61***d* are arranged in sequence from the lateral edge **53** toward the lateral edge **54**.

FIG. **8** more particularly sets forth a schematic top plan view of primitive select traces **86***a*, **86***b*, **86***c*, **86***d* for an associated columnar array **61** of drop generators and an associated columnar array **81** of FET drive circuits **85** (FIG. **6**) as implemented for example by traces in the gold metallization layer **111***g* (FIG. **5**) that is above and dielectrically separated from the associated array **81** of FET drive circuit and ground bus **181**. The primitive select traces **86***a*, **86***b*, **86***c*, **86***d* are respectively electrically connected to the four primitive groups **61***a*, **61***b*, **61***c*, **61***d* by resistor leads **57***b* (FIG. **8**) formed in the metallization layer **111***d* and interconnecting vias **58** (FIG. **9**) that extend between the primitive select traces and the resistor leads **57***b*.

The first primitive select trace **86***a* extends longitudinally along the first primitive group **61***a* and overlies a portion of heater resistor leads **57***b* (FIG. **9**) that are respectively connected to heater resistors **56** of the first primitive group **61***a*, and is connected by vias **58** (FIG. **9**) to such heater resistor leads **57***b*. The second primitive select trace **86***b* includes a section that extends along the second primitive group **61***b* and overlies a portion of heater resistor leads **57***b* (FIG. **9**) that are respectively connected to heater resistors **56** of the second primitive group **61***b*, and is connected by vias **58** to such heater resistor leads **57***b*. The second trace **86***b* includes a further section that extends along the first primitive select trace **86***a* on the side of the first primitive select trace **86***a* that is opposite the heater resistors **56** of the first primitive group **61***a*. The second primitive select trace **86***b* is generally L-shaped wherein the second section is narrower than the first section so as to bypass the first primitive select trace **86***a* which is narrower than the wider section of the second primitive select trace **86***b*.

The first and second primitive select traces **86***a*, **86***b* are generally at least coextensive longitudinally with the first and second primitive groups **61***a*, **61***b*, and are respectively appropriately connected to respective bond pads **74** disposed at the lateral edge **53** which is closest to the first and second primitive select traces **86***a*, **86***b*.

The fourth primitive select trace **86***d* extends longitudinally along the fourth primitive group **61***d* and overlies a portion of heater resistor leads **57***b* (FIG. **9**) that are connected to heater resistors **56** of the fourth primitive group **61***d*, and is connected by vias **58** to such heater resistor leads **57***b*. The third primitive select trace **86***c* includes a section that extends along the third primitive group **61***c* and overlies a portion of heater resistor leads **57***b* (FIG. **9**) that are connected to heater resistors **56** of the third primitive group **61***c*, and is connected by vias **58** to such heater resistor leads **57***b*. The third primitive select trace **86***c* includes a further section that extends along the fourth primitive select trace **86***d*. The third primitive select trace **86***c* is generally L-shaped wherein the second section is narrower than the first section so as to bypass the fourth primitive select trace **86***d* which is narrower than the wider section of the third primitive select trace **86***c*.

The third and fourth primitive select traces **86***c*, **86***d* are generally at least coextensive longitudinally with the third and fourth primitive groups **61***c*, **61***d*, and are respectively appropriately connected to bond pads **74** disposed at the lateral edge **54** that is closest to the third and fourth primitive select traces **86***c*, **86***d*.

By way of specific example, the primitive select traces **86***a*, **86***b*, **86***c*, **86***d* for a columnar array **61** of ink drop generators overlie the FET drive circuits and the ground bus associated with the columnar array of ink drop generators, and are contained in a region that is longitudinally coextensive with the associated columnar array **61**. In this manner, four primitive select traces for the four primitives of a

columnar array **61** of ink drop generators extend along the array toward the ends of the printhead substrate. More particularly, a first pair of primitive select traces for a first pair of primitive groups **61***a*, **61***b* disposed in one-half of the length of the printhead substrate are contained in a region that extends along such first pair of primitive groups, while a second pair of primitive select traces for a second pair of primitive groups **61***c*, **61***d* disposed in the other half of the length of the printhead substrate are contained in a region that extends along such second pair of primitive groups.

For ease of reference, the primitive select traces **86** and the associated ground bus that electrically connect the heater resistors **56** and associated FET drive circuits **85** to bond pads **74** are collectively referred to as power traces. Also for ease of reference, the primitive select traces **86** can be referred to as to the high side or non-grounded power traces.

Generally, the parasitic resistance (or on-resistance) of each of the FET drive circuits **85** is configured to compensate for the variation in the parasitic resistance presented to the different FET drive circuits **85** by the parasitic path formed by the power traces, so as to reduce the variation in the energy provided to the heater resistors. In particular, the power traces form a parasitic path that presents a parasitic resistance to the FET circuits that varies with location on the path, and the parasitic resistance of each of the FET drive circuits **85** is selected so that the combination of the parasitic resistance of each FET drive circuit **85** and the parasitic resistance of the power traces as presented to the FET drive circuit varies only slightly from one ink drop generator to another. Insofar as the heater resistors **56** are all of substantially the same resistance, the parasitic resistance of each FET drive circuit **85** is thus configured to compensate for the variation of the parasitic resistance of the associated power traces as presented to the different FET drive circuits **85**. In this manner, to the extent that substantially equal energies are provided to the bond pads connected to the power traces, substantially equal energies can be provided to the different heater resistors **56**.

Referring more particularly to FIGS. **9** and **10**, each of the FET drive circuits **85** comprises a plurality of electrically interconnected drain electrode fingers **87** disposed over drain region fingers **89** formed in the silicon substrate **111***a* (FIG. **5**), and a plurality of electrically interconnected source electrode fingers **97** interdigitated or interleaved with the drain electrodes **87** and disposed over source region fingers **99** formed in the silicon substrate **111***a*. Polysilicon gate fingers **91** that are interconnected at respective ends are disposed on a thin gate oxide layer **93** formed on the silicon substrate **111***a*. A phosphosilicate glass layer **95** separates the drain electrodes **87** and the source electrodes **97** from the silicon substrate **111***a*. A plurality of conductive drain contacts **88** electrically connect the drain electrodes **87** to the drain regions **89**, while a plurality of conductive source contacts **98** electrically connect the source electrodes **97** to the source regions **99**.

The area occupied by each FET drive circuit is preferably small, and the on-resistance of each FET drive circuit is preferrably low, for example less than or equal to 14 or 16 ohms (i.e., at most 14 or 16 ohms), which requires efficient FET drive circuits. For example, the on-resistance Ron can be related to FET drive circuit area A as follows:

$$Ron < (250{,}000 \text{ ohms}\cdot\text{micrometer}^2)/A$$

wherein the area A is in micrometers^2 (μm^2). This can be accomplished by for example with a gate oxide layer **93** having a thickness that is less than or equal to 800 Angstroms (i.e., at most 800 Angstroms), or a gate length that is less than 4 μm. Also, having a heater resistor resistance of at least 100 ohms allows the FET circuits to be made smaller than if the heater resistors had a lower resistance, since with a greater heater resistor value a greater FET turn-on resistance can be tolerated from a consideration of distribution of energy between parasitics and the heater resistors.

As a particular example, the drain electrodes **87**, drain regions **89**, source electrodes **97**, source regions **99**, and the polysilicon gate fingers **91** can extend substantially orthogonally or transversely to the reference axis L and to the longitudinal extent of the ground busses **181**. Also, for each FET circuit **85**, the extent of the drain regions **89** and the source regions **99** transversely to the reference axis L is the same as extent of the gate fingers transversely to the reference axis L, as shown in FIG. **6**, which defines the extent of the active regions transversely to the reference axis L. For ease of reference, the extent of the drain electrode fingers **87**, drain region fingers **89**, source electrode fingers **97**, source region fingers **99**, and polysilicon gate fingers **91** can be referred to as the longitudinal extent of such elements insofar as such elements are long and narrow in a strip-like or finger-like manner.

By way of illustrative example, the on-resistance of each of the FET circuits **85** is individually configured by controlling the longitudinal extent or length of a continuously non-contacted segment of the drain region fingers, wherein a continuously non-contacted segment is devoid of electrical contacts **88**. For example, the continuously non-contacted segments of the drain region fingers can begin at the ends of the drain regions **89** that are furthest from the heater resistor **56**. The on-resistance of a particular FET circuit **85** increases with increasing length of the continuously non-contacted drain region finger segment, and such length is selected to determine the on-resistance of a particular FET circuit.

As another example, the on-resistance of each FET circuit **85** can be configured by selecting the size of the FET circuit. For example, the extent of an FET circuit transversely to the reference axis L can be selected to define the on-resistance.

For a typical implementation wherein the power traces for a particular FET circuit **85** are routed by reasonably direct paths to bond pads **74** on the closest of the longitudinally separated ends of the printhead structure, parasitic resistance increases with distance from the closest end of the printhead, and the on-resistance of the FET drive circuits **85** is decreased (making an FET circuit more efficient) with distance from such closest end, so as to offset the increase in power trace parasitic resistance. As a specific example, as to continuously non-contacted drain finger segments of the respective FET drive circuits **85** that start at the ends of the drain region fingers that are furthest from the heater resistors **56**, the lengths of such segments are decreased with distance from the closest one of the longitudinally separated ends of the printhead structure.

Each ground bus **181** is formed of the same thin film metallization layer as the drain electrodes **87** and the source electrodes **97** of the FET circuits **85**, and the active areas of each of the FET circuits comprised of the source and drain regions **89**, **99** and the polysilicon gates **91** advantageously extend beneath an associated ground bus **181**. This allows the ground bus and FET circuit arrays to occupy narrower regions which in turn allows for a narrower, and thus less costly, thin film substructure.

Also, in an implementation wherein the continuously non-contacted segments of the drain region fingers start at the ends of the drain region fingers that are furthest from the heater resistors **56**, the extent of each ground bus **181**

transversely or laterally to the reference axis L and toward the associated heater resistors **56** can be increased as the length of the continuously non-contacted drain finger sections is increased, since the drain electrodes do not need to extend over such continuously non-contacted drain finger sections. In other words, the width W of a ground bus **181** can be increased by increasing the amount by which the ground bus overlies the active regions of the FET drive circuits **85**, depending upon the length of the continuously non-contacted drain region segments. This is achieved without increasing the width of the region occupied by a ground bus **181** and its associated FET drive circuit array **81** since the increase is achieved by increasing the amount of overlap between the ground bus and the active regions of the FET drive circuits **85**. Effectively, at any particular FET circuit **85**, the ground bus can overlap the active region transversely to the reference axis L by substantially the length of the non-contacted segments of the drain regions.

For the specific example wherein the continuously non-contacted drain region segments start at the ends of the drain region fingers that are furthest from the heater resistors **56** and wherein the lengths of such continuously non-contacted drain region segments decrease with distance from the closest end of the printhead structure, the modulation or variation of the width W of a ground bus **181** with the variation of the length of the continuously non-contacted drain region segments provides for a ground bus having a width W**181** that increases with proximity to the closest end of the printhead structure, as depicted in FIG. **8**. Since the amount of shared currents increases with proximity to the bonds pads **74**, such shape advantageously provides for decreased ground bus resistance with proximity to the bond pads **74**.

Ground bus resistance can also be reduced by laterally extending portions of the ground bus **181** into longitudinally spaced apart areas between the decoder logic circuits **35**. For example, such portions can extend laterally beyond the active regions by the width of the region in which the decoder logic circuits **35** are formed.

The following circuitry portions associated with a columnar array of ink drop generators can be contained in respective regions having the following widths that are indicated in FIGS. **6** and **8** by the reference designations that follow the width values.

REGIONS THAT CONTAIN:	WIDTH
Resistor leads 57	About 95 micrometers (μm) or less (W57)
FET circuits 81	At most 350 μm or 220 μm for printhead 100A, and at most 250 μm or 180 μm for printhead 100B (W81)
Decode logic circuits 31	About 34 μm or less (W31)
Primitive select traces 86	About 290 μm or less (W86)

These widths are measured orthogonally or laterally to the longitudinal extent of the printhead substrate which is aligned with the reference axis L.

Referring now to FIG. **11**, set forth therein is a schematic perspective view of an example of an ink jet printing device **20** in which the above described printheads can be employed. The ink jet printing device **20** of FIG. **11** includes a chassis **122** surrounded by a housing or enclosure **124**, typically of a molded plastic material. The chassis **122** is formed for example of sheet metal and includes a vertical panel **122***a*. Sheets of print media are individually fed through a print zone **125** by an adaptive print media handling system **126** that includes a feed tray **128** for storing print media before printing. The print media may be any type of suitable printable sheet material such as paper, card-stock, transparencies, Mylar, and the like, but for convenience the illustrated embodiments described as using paper as the print medium. A series of conventional motor-driven rollers including a drive roller **129** driven by a stepper motor may be used to move print media from the feed tray **128** into the print zone **125**. After printing, the drive roller **129** drives the printed sheet onto a pair of retractable output drying wing members **130** which are shown extended to receive a printed sheet. The wing members **130** hold the newly printed sheet for a short time above any previously printed sheets still drying in an output tray **132** before pivotally retracting to the sides, as shown by curved arrows **133**, to drop the newly printed sheet into the output tray **132**. The print media handling system may include a series of adjustment mechanisms for accommodating different sizes of print media, including letter, legal, A-4, envelopes, etc., such as a sliding length adjustment arm **134** and an envelope feed slot **135**.

The printer of FIG. **11** further includes a printer controller **136**, schematically illustrated as a microprocessor, disposed on a printed circuit board **139** supported on the rear side of the chassis vertical panel **122***a*. The printer controller **136** receives instructions from a host device such as a personal computer (not shown) and controls the operation of the printer including advance of print media through the print zone **125**, movement of a print carriage **140**, and application of signals to the ink drop generators **40**.

A print carriage slider rod **138** having a longitudinal axis parallel to a carriage scan axis is supported by the chassis **122** to sizeably support a print carriage **140** for reciprocating translational movement or scanning along the carriage scan axis. The print carriage **140** supports first and second removable ink jet printhead cartridges **150**, **152** (each of which is sometimes called a "pen," "print cartridge," or "cartridge"). The print cartridges **150**, **152** include respective printheads **154**, **156** that respectively have generally downwardly facing nozzles for ejecting ink generally downwardly onto a portion of the print media that is in the print zone **125**. The print cartridges **150**, **152** are more particularly clamped in the print carriage **140** by a latch mechanism that includes clamping levers, latch members or lids **170**, **172**.

For reference, print media is advanced through the print zone **125** along a media axis which is parallel to the tangent to the portion of the print media that is beneath and traversed by the nozzles of the cartridges **150**, **152**. If the media axis and the carriage axis are located on the same plane, as shown in FIG. **11**, they would be perpendicular to each other.

An anti-rotation mechanism on the back of the print carriage engages a horizontally disposed anti-pivot bar **185** that is formed integrally with the vertical panel **122***a* of the chassis **122**, for example, to prevent forward pivoting of the print carriage **140** about the slider rod **138**.

By way of illustrative example, the print cartridge **150** is a monochrome printing cartridge while the print cartridge **152** is a tri-color printing cartridge.

The print carriage **140** is driven along the slider rod **138** by an endless belt **158** which can be driven in a conventional manner, and a linear encoder strip **159** is utilized to detect position of the print carriage **140** along the carriage scan axis, for example in accordance with conventional techniques.

Although the foregoing has been a description and illustration of specific embodiments of the invention, various modifications and changes thereto can be made by persons

skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention as defined by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An ink jet printhead comprising:

a printhead substrate including a plurality of thin film layers;

a columnar array of drop generators defined in said printhead substrate and extending along a longitudinal axis L;

each drop generator having a heater resistor having a resistance of at least 100 ohms; and

a columnar array of FET circuits formed in said printhead substrate and respectively connected to said drop generators, said FET circuits including active regions each comprised of drain regions, source regions, and a gate disposed on a gate oxide layer, said columnar array of FET circuits contained in an FET region having a width that is orthogonal to said longitudinal axis L, said width being at most 350 micrometers.

2. The printhead of claim **1** wherein said gate oxide layer has a thickness of at most 800 Angstroms.

3. The printhead of claim **1** wherein each of said FET circuits has a gate length that is less than 4 micrometers.

4. The printhead of claim **1** wherein each of said FET circuits has an on-resistance of at most 16 ohms.

5. The printhead of claim **1** wherein each of said FET circuits has an on-resistance of at most 14 ohms.

6. The printhead of claim **1** wherein said power traces includes a ground bus that overlaps said columnar array of FET drive circuits.

7. The printhead of claim **6** wherein said ground bus has a width transversely to the longitudinal reference axis L that varies along the longitudinal reference axis L.

8. The printhead of claim **1** further including primitive select power traces connected to said drop generators and said FET drive circuits, said primitive select power traces overlying said columnar array of FET drive circuits.

9. The printhead of claim **1** wherein said heater resistor resistance is at least 120 ohms.

10. An ink jet printhead comprising:

a printhead substrate including a plurality of thin film layers;

a columnar array of drop generators defined in said printhead substrate and extending along a longitudinal axis L;

each drop generator having a heater resistor having a resistance of at least 100 ohms;

a columnar array of FET circuits formed in said printhead substrate and respectively connected to said drop generators, said FET circuits including active regions each comprised of drain regions, source regions, and a gate disposed on a gate oxide layer; and

each of said FET circuits having a gate length that is less than 4 micrometers.

11. The printhead of claim **10** wherein said gate oxide layer has a thickness of at most 800 Angstroms.

12. The printhead of claim **10** wherein each of said FET circuits has an on-resistance of at most 16 ohms.

13. The printhead of claim **10** wherein each of said FET circuits has an on-resistance of at most 14 ohms.

14. The printhead of claim **10** wherein said power traces includes a ground bus that overlaps said columnar array of FET drive circuits.

15. The printhead of claim **14** wherein said ground bus has a width transversely to the longitudinal reference axis L that varies along the longitudinal reference axis L.

16. The printhead of claim **10** further including primitive select power traces connected to said drop generators and said FET drive circuits, said primitive select power traces overlying said columnar array of FET drive circuits.

17. The printhead of claim **10** wherein said heater resistor resistance is at least 120 ohms.

18. An ink jet printhead comprising:

a printhead substrate including a plurality of thin film layers;

a columnar array of drop generators defined in said printhead substrate and extending along a longitudinal axis L;

each drop generator having a heater resistor having a resistance of at least 100 ohms;

a columnar array of FET circuits formed in said printhead substrate and respectively connected to said drop generators, said FET circuits including active regions each comprised of drain regions, source regions, and a gate disposed on a gate oxide layer; and

each of said FET circuits having an on-resistance of at most 14 ohms.

19. The printhead of claim **18** wherein said gate oxide layer has a thickness of at most 800 Angstroms.

20. The printhead of claim **18** wherein said power traces includes a ground bus that overlaps said columnar array of FET drive circuits.

21. The printhead of claim **20** wherein said ground bus has a width transversely to the longitudinal reference axis L that varies along the longitudinal reference axis L.

22. The printhead of claim **18** further including primitive select power traces connected to said drop generators and said FET drive circuits, said primitive select power traces overlying said columnar array of FET drive circuits.

23. The printhead of claim **18** wherein said heater resistor resistance is at least 120 ohms.

24. An ink jet printhead comprising:

a printhead substrate including a plurality of thin film layers;

a columnar array of drop generators defined in said printhead substrate and extending along a longitudinal axis L;

each drop generator having a heater resistor having a resistance of at least 100 ohms;

a columnar array of FET circuits formed in said printhead substrate and respectively connected to said drop generators, said FET circuits including active regions each comprised of drain regions, source regions, and a gate disposed on a gate oxide layer;

said columnar array of FET circuits contained in an FET region having a width that is orthogonal to said longitudinal axis L, said width being at most 350 micrometers;

each of said FET circuits having a gate length that is less than 4 micrometers; and

each of said FET circuits having an on-resistance of at most 14 ohms.

25. The printhead of claim **24** wherein said gate oxide layer has a thickness of at most 800 Angstroms.

26. (New) The printhead of claim **24** wherein said power traces includes a ground bus that overlaps said columnar array of FET drive circuits.

27. The printhead of claim **26** wherein said ground bus has a width transversely to the longitudinal reference axis L that varies along the longitudinal reference axis L.

28. The printhead of claim **26** further including primitive select power traces connected to said drop generators and said FET drive circuits, said primitive select power traces overlying said columnar array of FET drive circuits.

29. The printhead of claim **24** wherein said heater resistor resistance is at least 120 ohms.

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