



US007814668B1

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

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 7,814,668 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Oct. 19, 2010**

- (54) **EYE ALIGNMENT ASSEMBLY**
- (75) Inventors: **Larry Pulkrabek**, Osceola, IA (US);
Jay Engstrom, Port Wing, WI (US); **Bill Pedersen**, Duluth, MN (US)
- (73) Assignee: **Field Logic, Inc.**, Superior, WI (US)
- (*) 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.: **12/726,594**
- (22) Filed: **Mar. 18, 2010**

5,442,861 A	8/1995	Lorocco	
5,560,113 A *	10/1996	Simo et al.	33/265
5,606,638 A	2/1997	Tymianski et al.	
5,638,604 A	6/1997	Lorocco	
5,649,526 A	7/1997	Ellig	
5,685,081 A	11/1997	Winegar	
5,850,700 A	12/1998	Capson et al.	
5,862,603 A	1/1999	Ellig	
RE36,266 E	8/1999	Gibbs	
5,956,854 A	9/1999	Lorocco	
6,000,141 A	12/1999	Afshari	
6,016,608 A	1/2000	Lorocco	
6,122,833 A	9/2000	Lorocco	
6,216,352 B1	4/2001	Lorocco	

Related U.S. Application Data

- (63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 12/684,775, filed on Jan. 8, 2010.

- (51) **Int. Cl.**
F41G 1/00 (2006.01)
F41G 1/467 (2006.01)
- (52) **U.S. Cl.** **33/263; 33/265; 33/334;**
124/87
- (58) **Field of Classification Search** **33/263,**
33/264, 265, 266, 334
See application file for complete search history.

(Continued)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Vital Gear 2007 Product Catalog.

(Continued)

Primary Examiner—G. Bradley Bennett
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Stoel Rives LLP

(56) **References Cited**

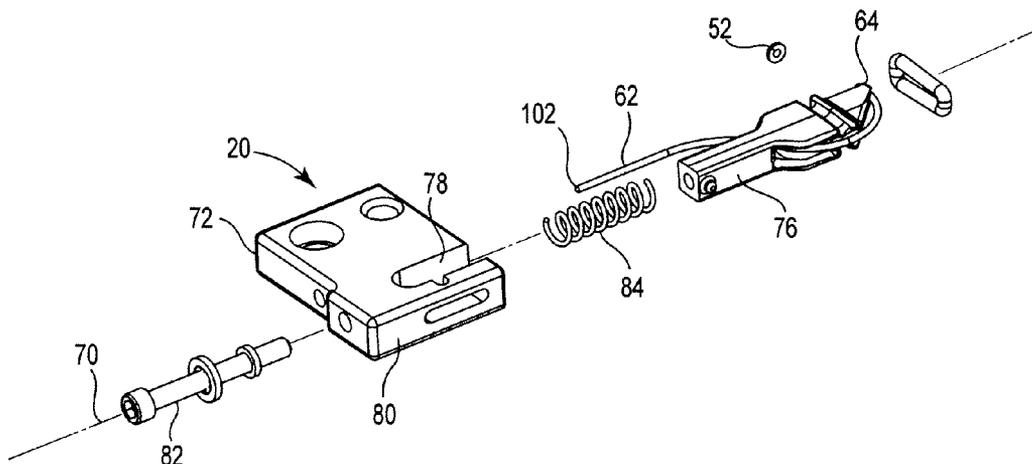
U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

4,400,887 A	8/1983	Mason
4,764,011 A	8/1988	Goldstein
4,928,394 A	5/1990	Sherman
5,080,084 A	1/1992	Kendall et al.
5,157,839 A	10/1992	Beutler
5,168,631 A	12/1992	Sherman
5,201,124 A	4/1993	Sherman
5,231,765 A	8/1993	Sherman
5,303,479 A	4/1994	Rudovsky
5,308,986 A	5/1994	Walker
5,338,037 A	8/1994	Toyohara
5,384,966 A	1/1995	Gibbs
5,420,959 A	5/1995	Walker et al.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An eye alignment assembly for aligning a tool with a user. The eye alignment assembly is mounted to the tool. The eye alignment assembly includes a sight point of an optical fiber positioned a distance behind an alignment indicia on a lens. An adjustment system is provided to reposition the sight point of the optical fiber relative to the alignment indicia on the lens. The eye alignment assembly provides an indication of orientation of the user relative to the tool in at least two degrees of freedom.

23 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets



U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

6,311,405	B1	11/2001	Slates	7,036,234	B2	5/2006	Rager	
6,360,472	B1	3/2002	Lorocco	7,200,943	B2	4/2007	Afshari	
6,385,855	B1	5/2002	Tymianski	7,290,345	B2	11/2007	Ellig	
6,421,946	B1	7/2002	Lorocco	7,331,112	B2	2/2008	Gibbs	
6,477,778	B1	11/2002	Lorocco	7,461,460	B2	12/2008	Priebe	
6,477,780	B2	11/2002	Aldred	7,464,477	B2	12/2008	Afshari	
6,557,291	B2	5/2003	Hoadley	7,503,321	B2	3/2009	Afshari	
6,560,884	B1	5/2003	Afshari	7,562,486	B2	7/2009	Lorocco	
6,564,462	B1	5/2003	Henry	7,574,810	B1	8/2009	Lorocco	
6,571,482	B1	6/2003	Tymianski	7,574,811	B2	8/2009	Kurtzhals et al.	
6,581,317	B1	6/2003	Slates	2003/0110647	A1*	6/2003	Henry	33/265
6,634,110	B2	10/2003	Johnson	2007/0028467	A1*	2/2007	Bradley et al.	33/265
6,634,111	B2	10/2003	Lorocco	2009/0199418	A1	8/2009	Lorocco	
6,725,854	B1	4/2004	Afshari					
6,796,037	B1	9/2004	Geffers et al.					
6,802,129	B1	10/2004	Wirth					
6,817,105	B2	11/2004	Lorocco					
6,938,349	B2	9/2005	Afshari					
6,981,329	B1	1/2006	Strathman					

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

U.S. Appl. No. 12/684,775 entitled Eye Alignment Assembly for Targeting Systems, filed Jan. 8, 2010.
U.S. Appl. No. 12/791,503 entitled Bow Sight and Eye Alignment Assembly With Phosphorescent Fiber, filed Jun. 1, 2010.

* cited by examiner

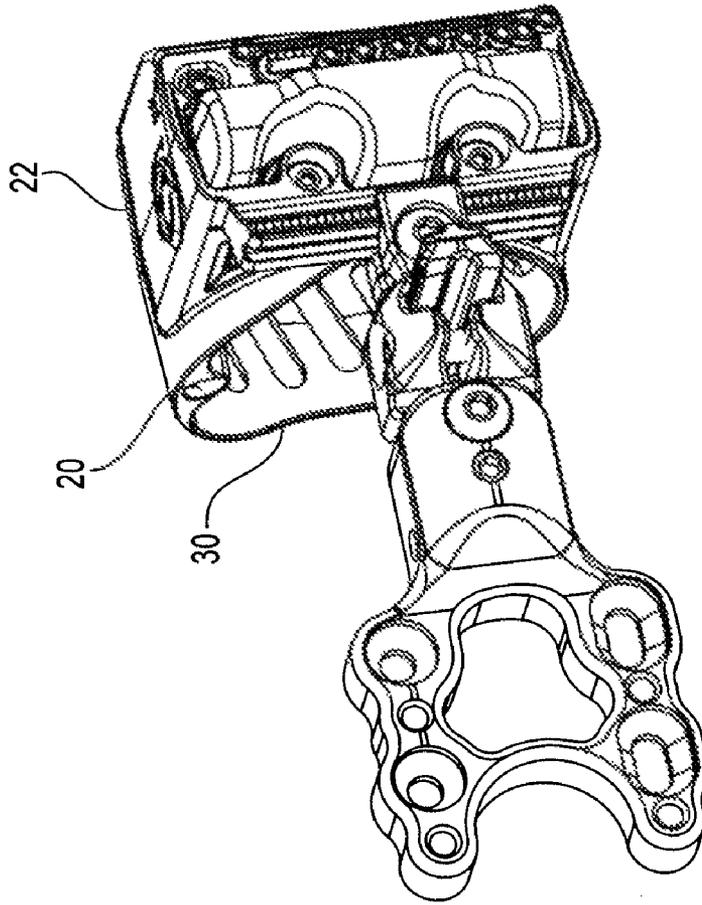


Fig. 1B

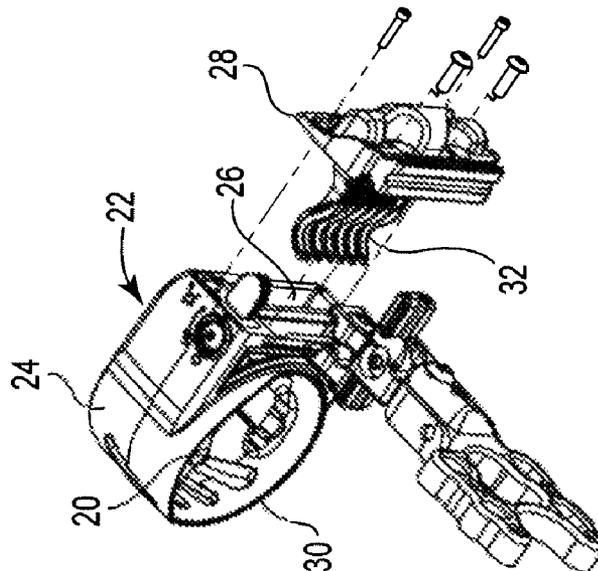


Fig. 1A

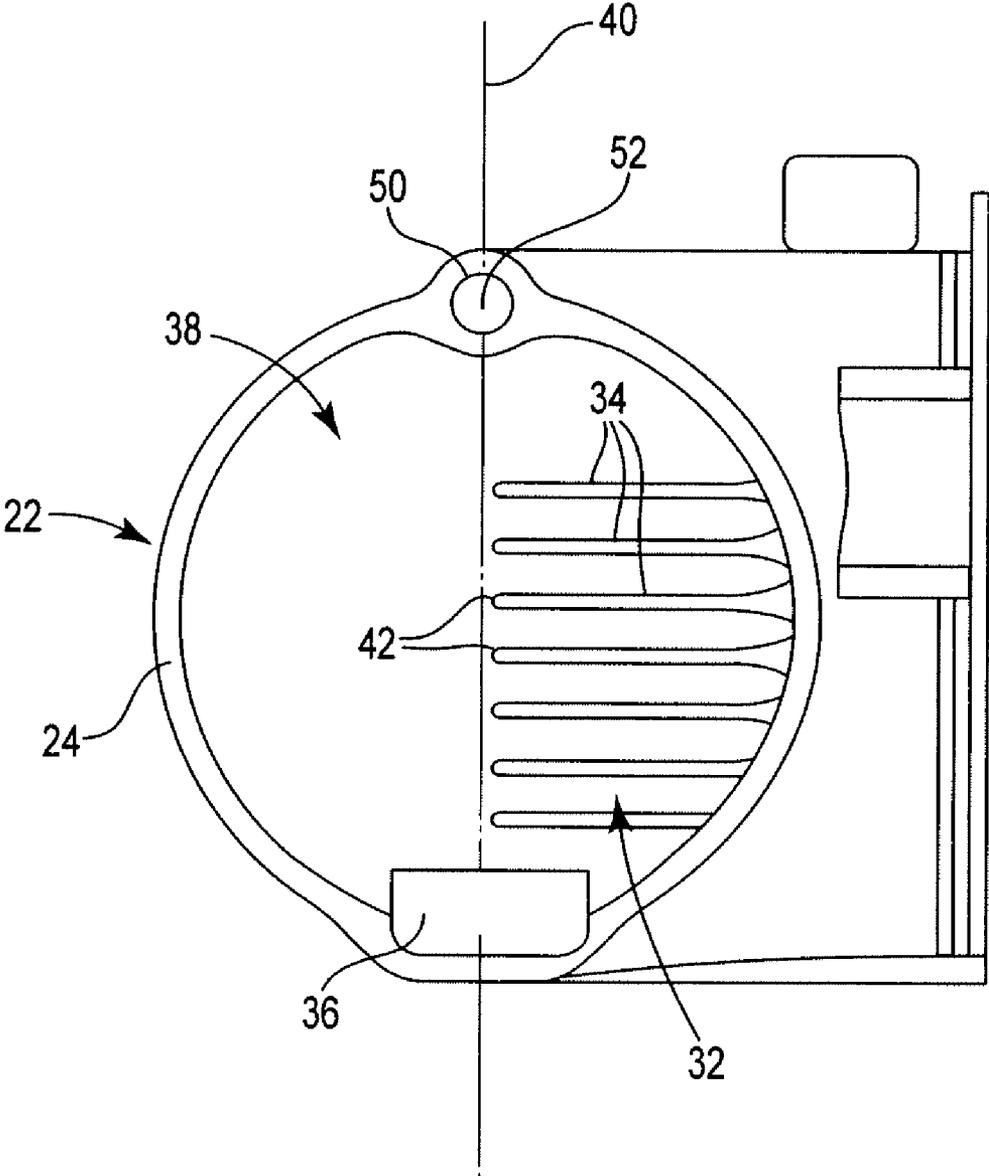


Fig. 2

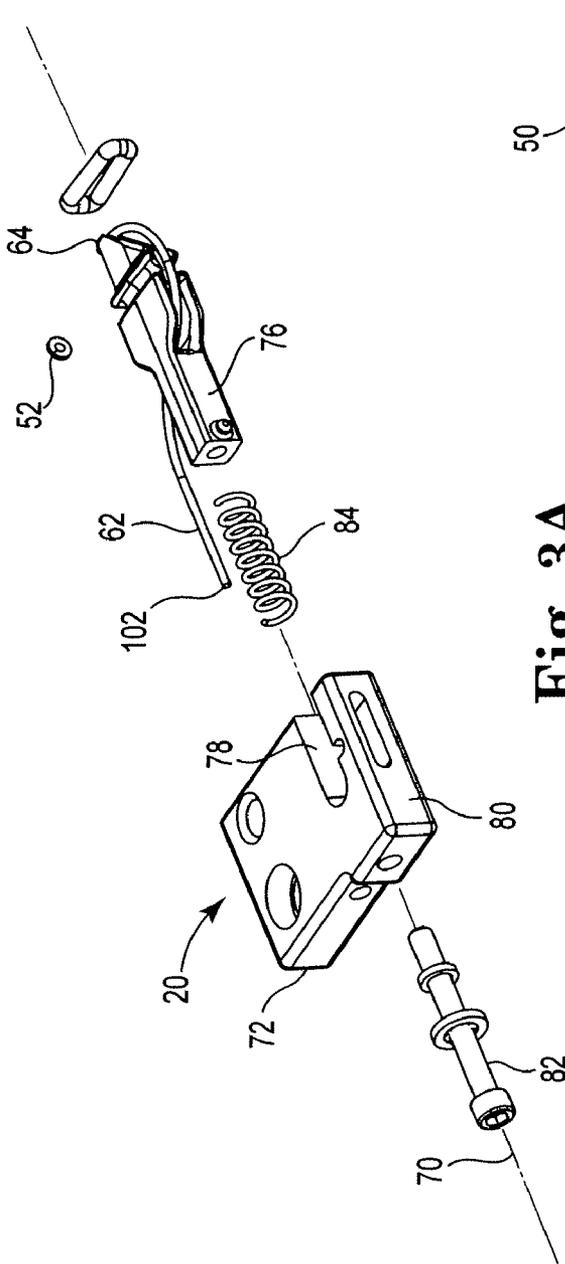


Fig. 3A

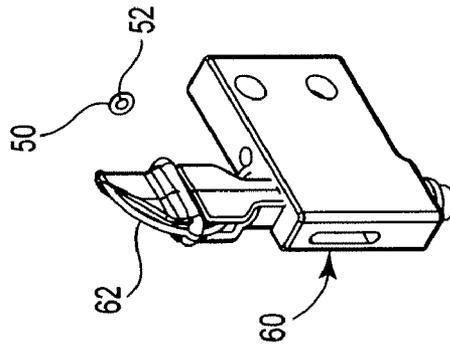


Fig. 3B

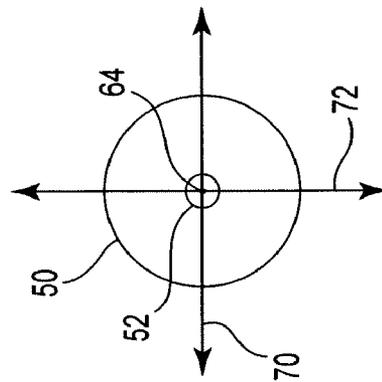


Fig. 3C

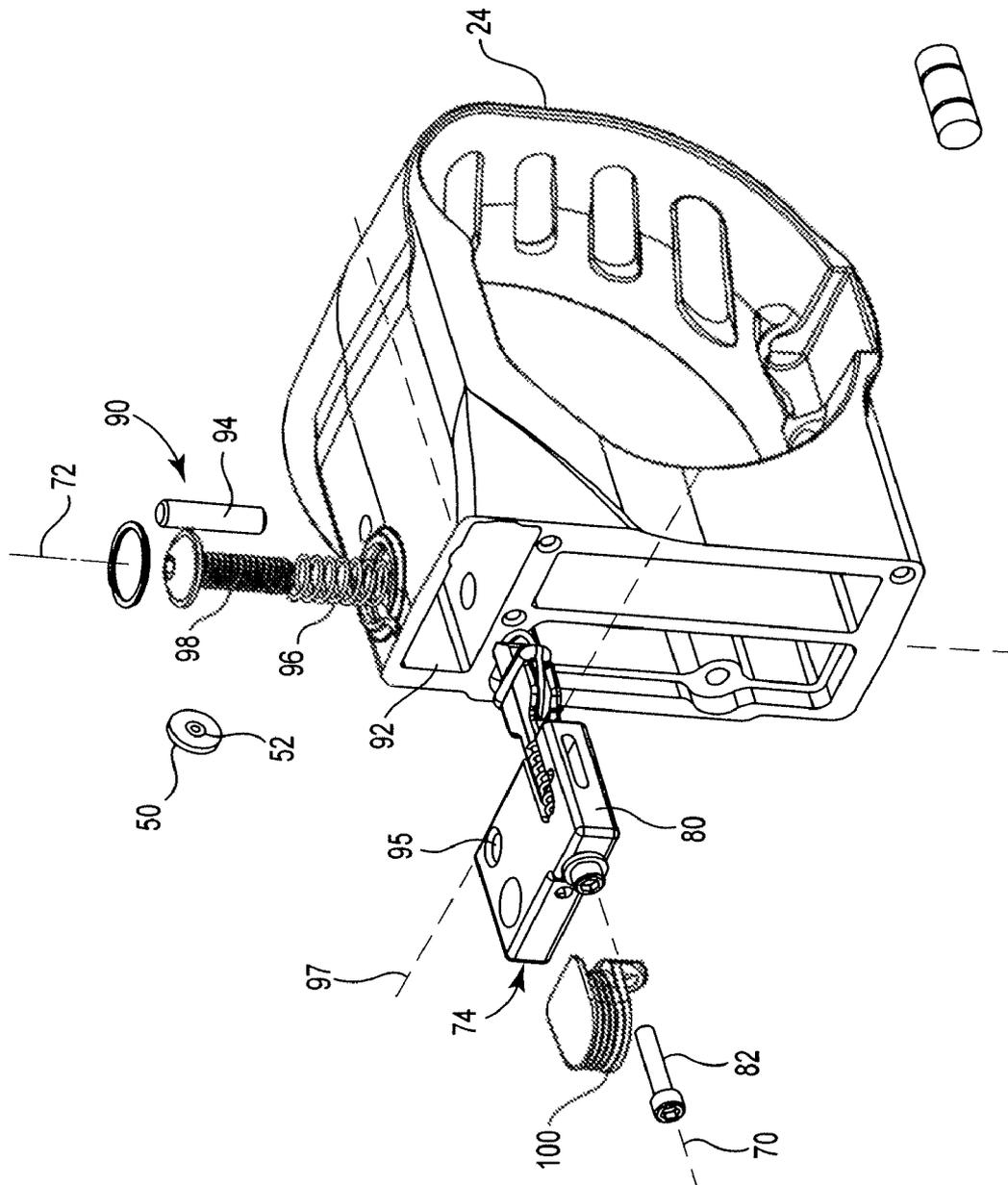


Fig. 3D

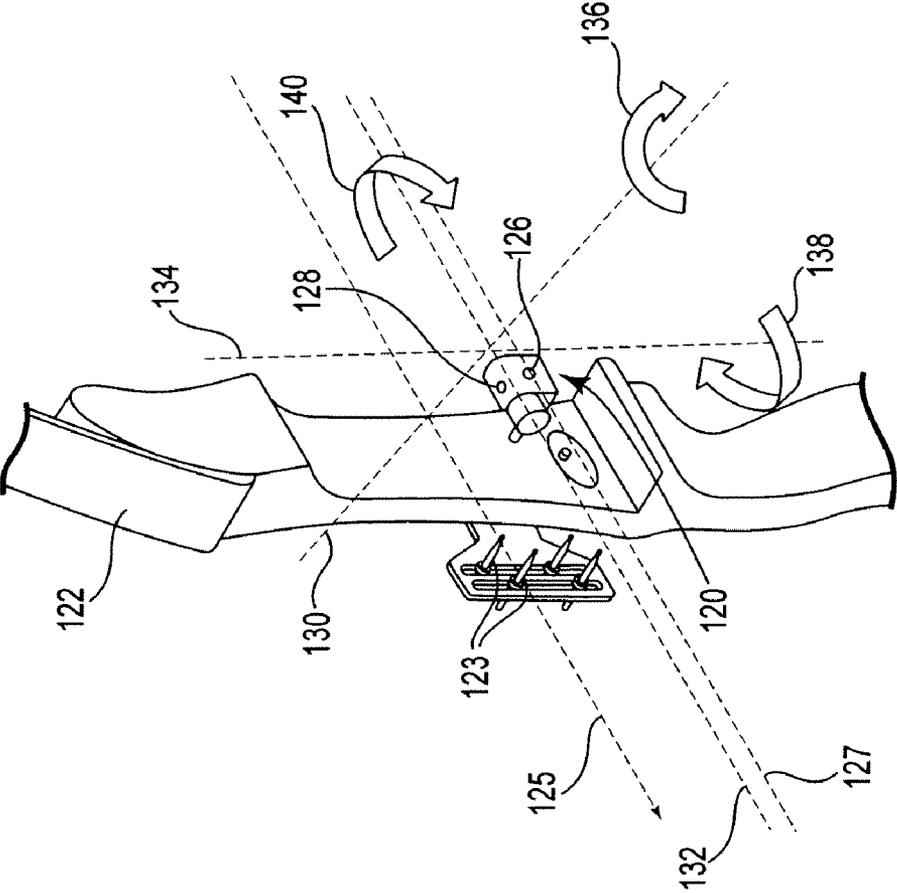


Fig. 4A

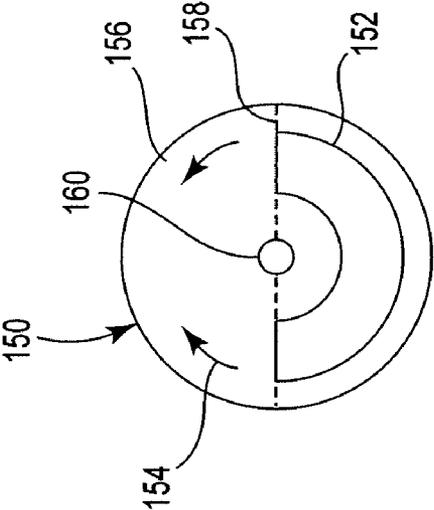


Fig. 4B

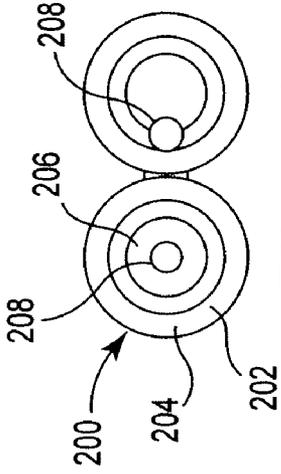


Fig. 6A

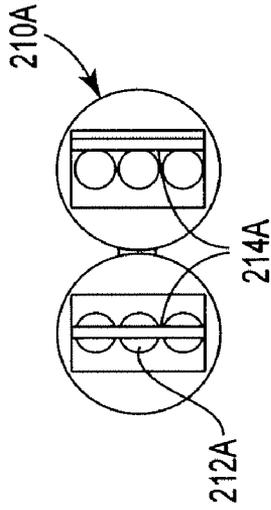


Fig. 6B

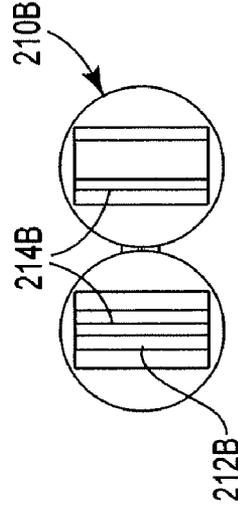


Fig. 6C

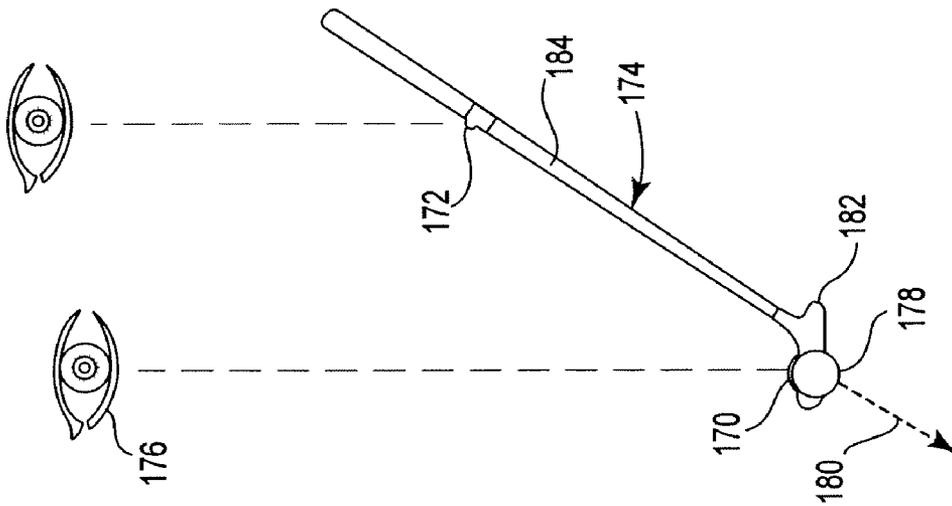


Fig. 5

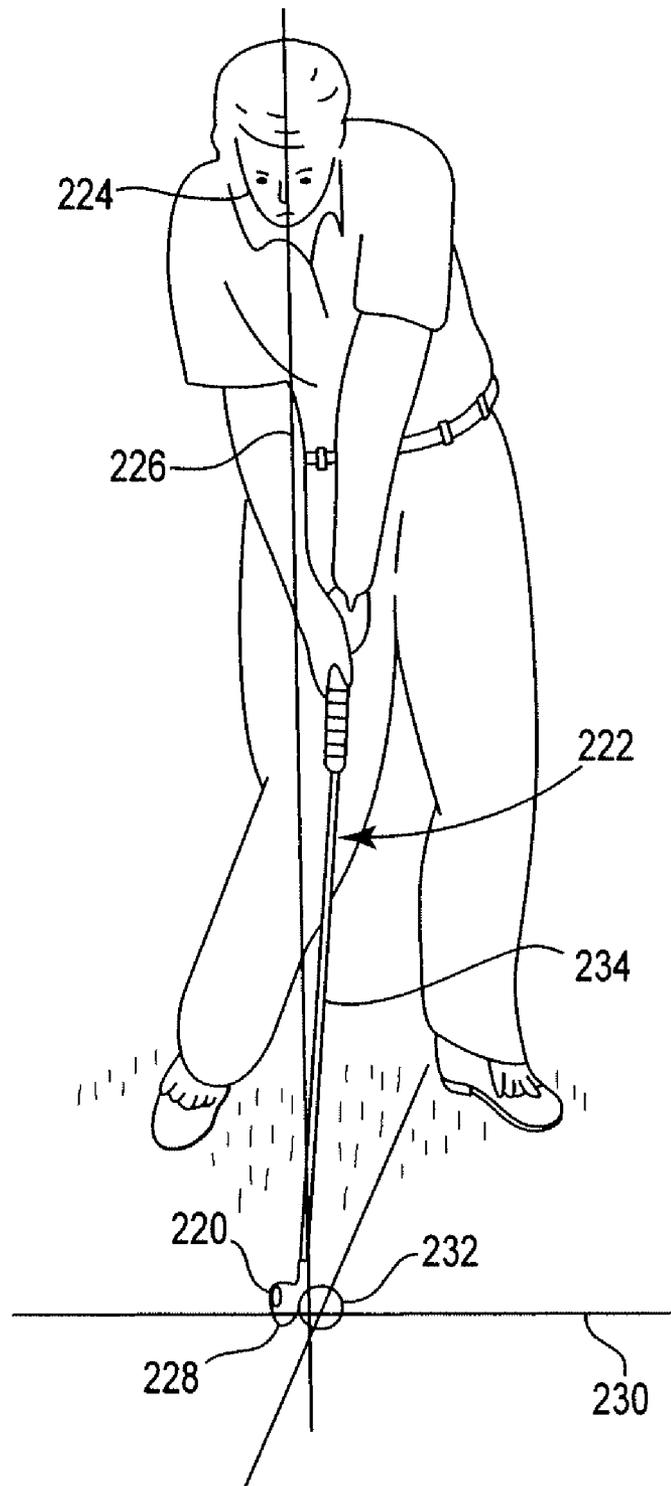


Fig. 7

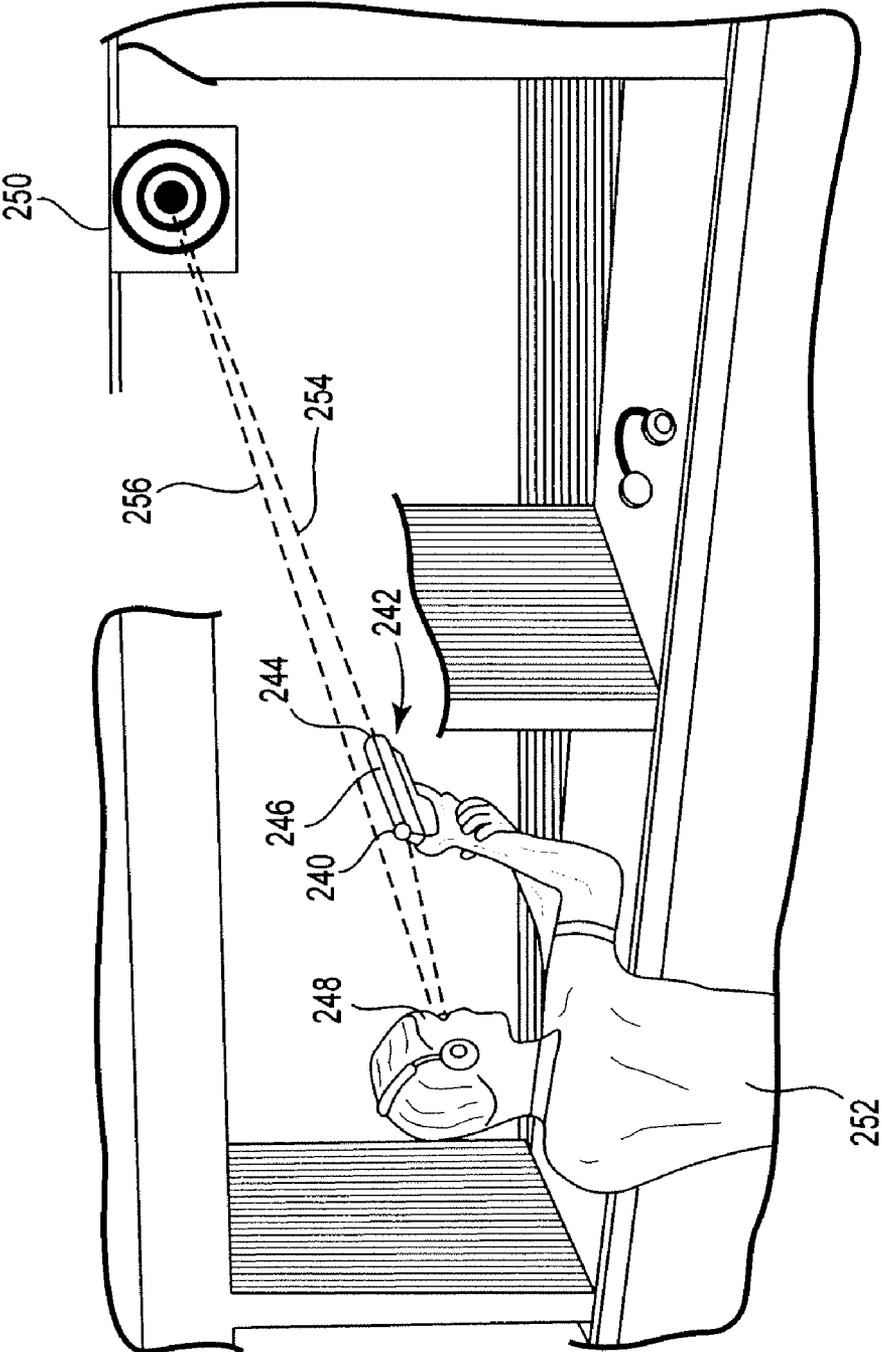


Fig. 8

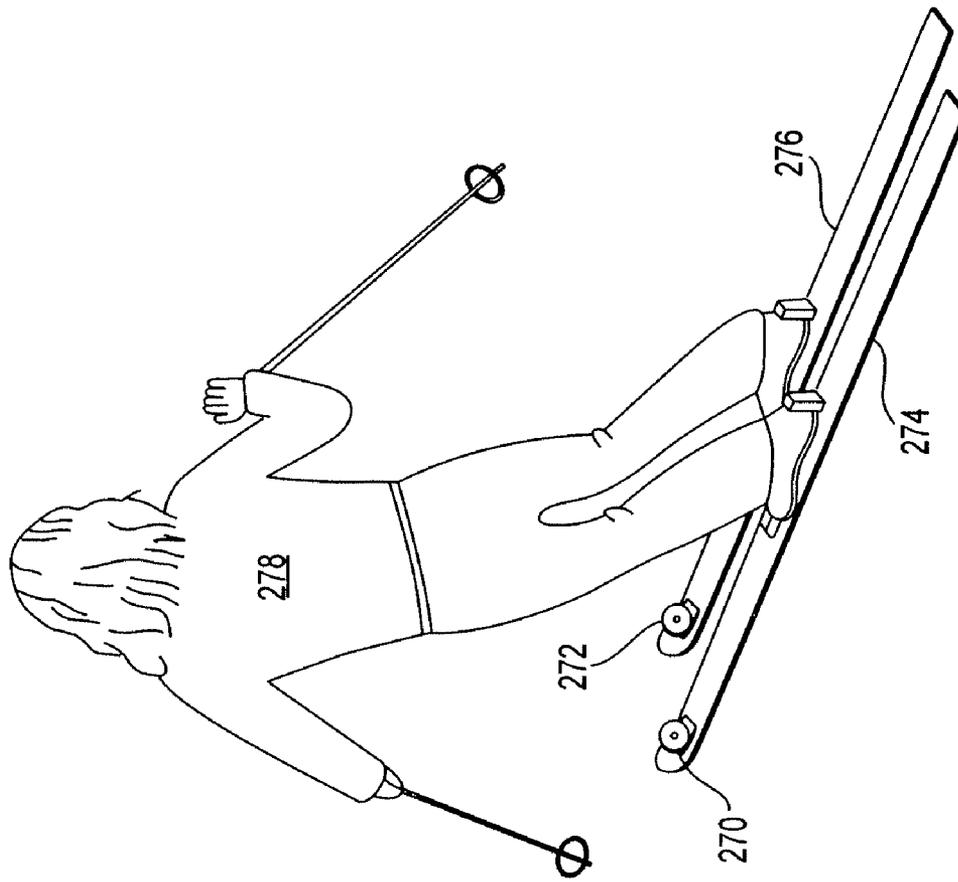


Fig. 9

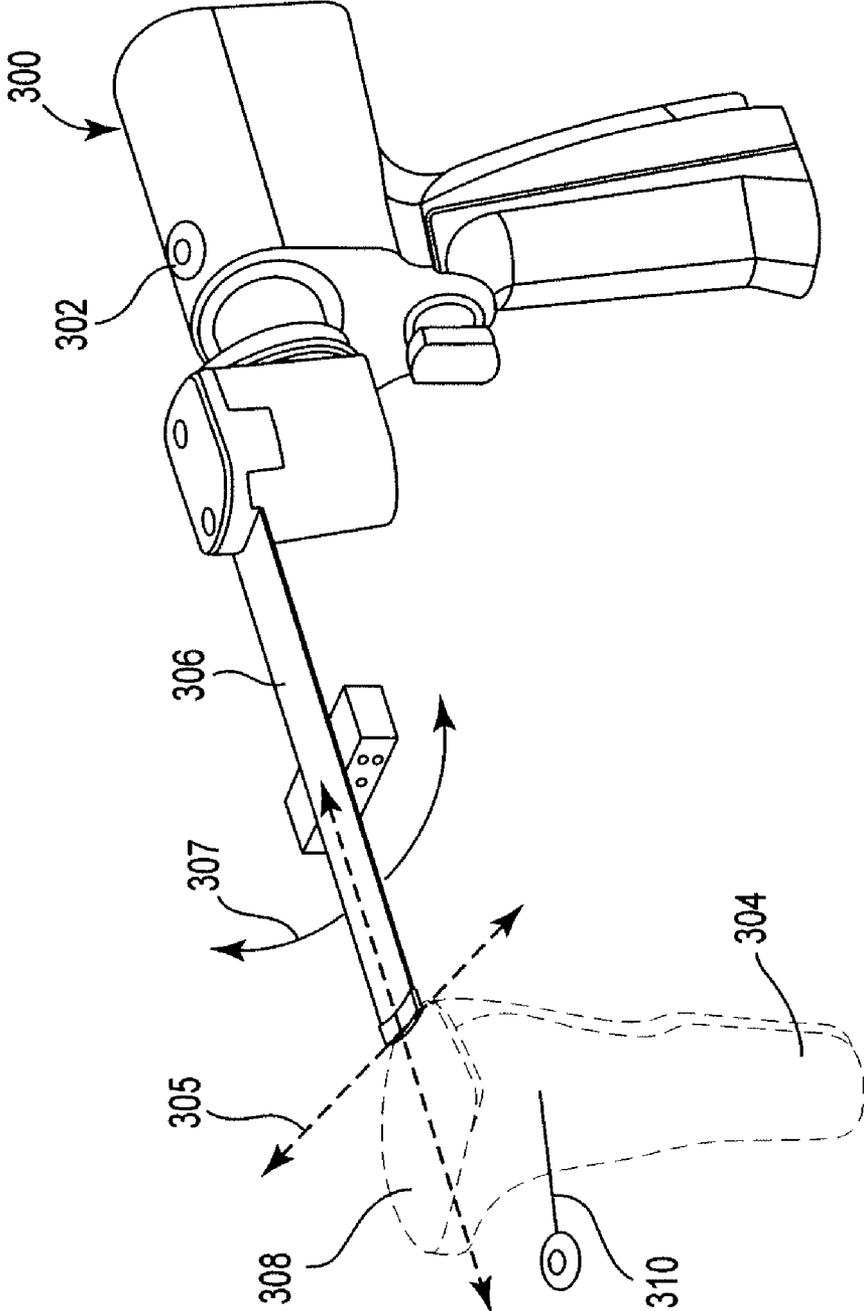


Fig. 10

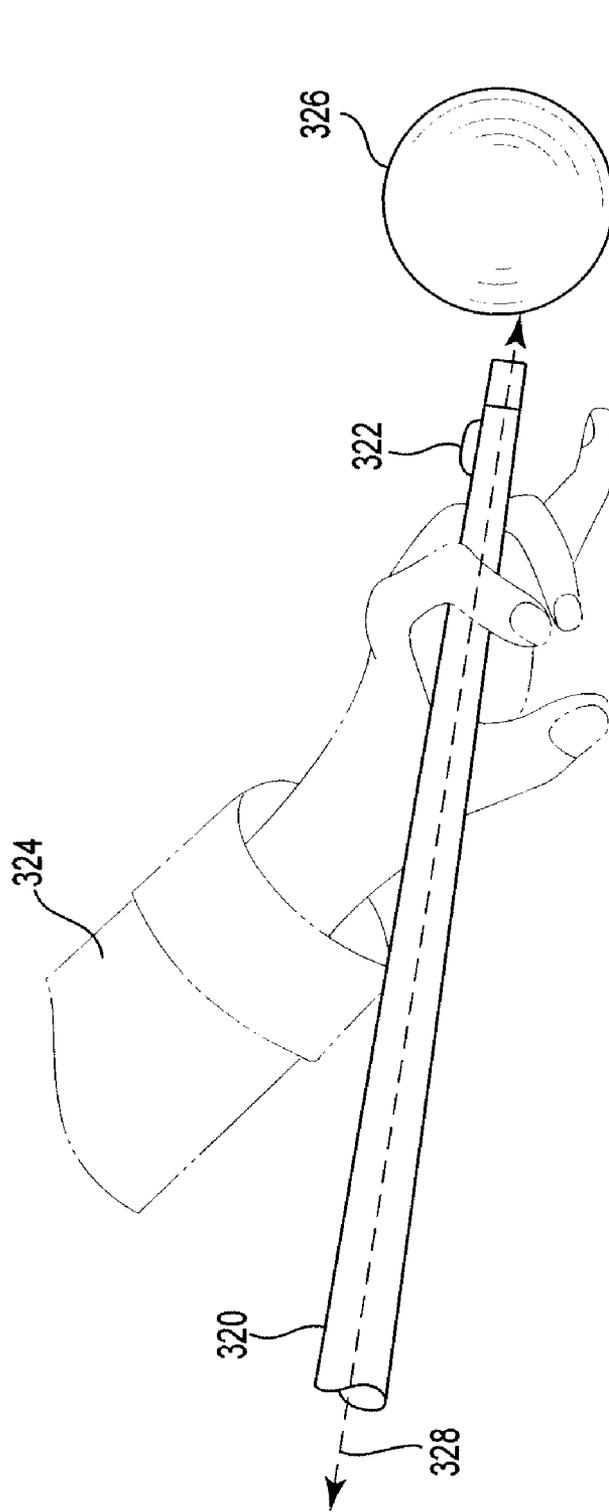


Fig. 11

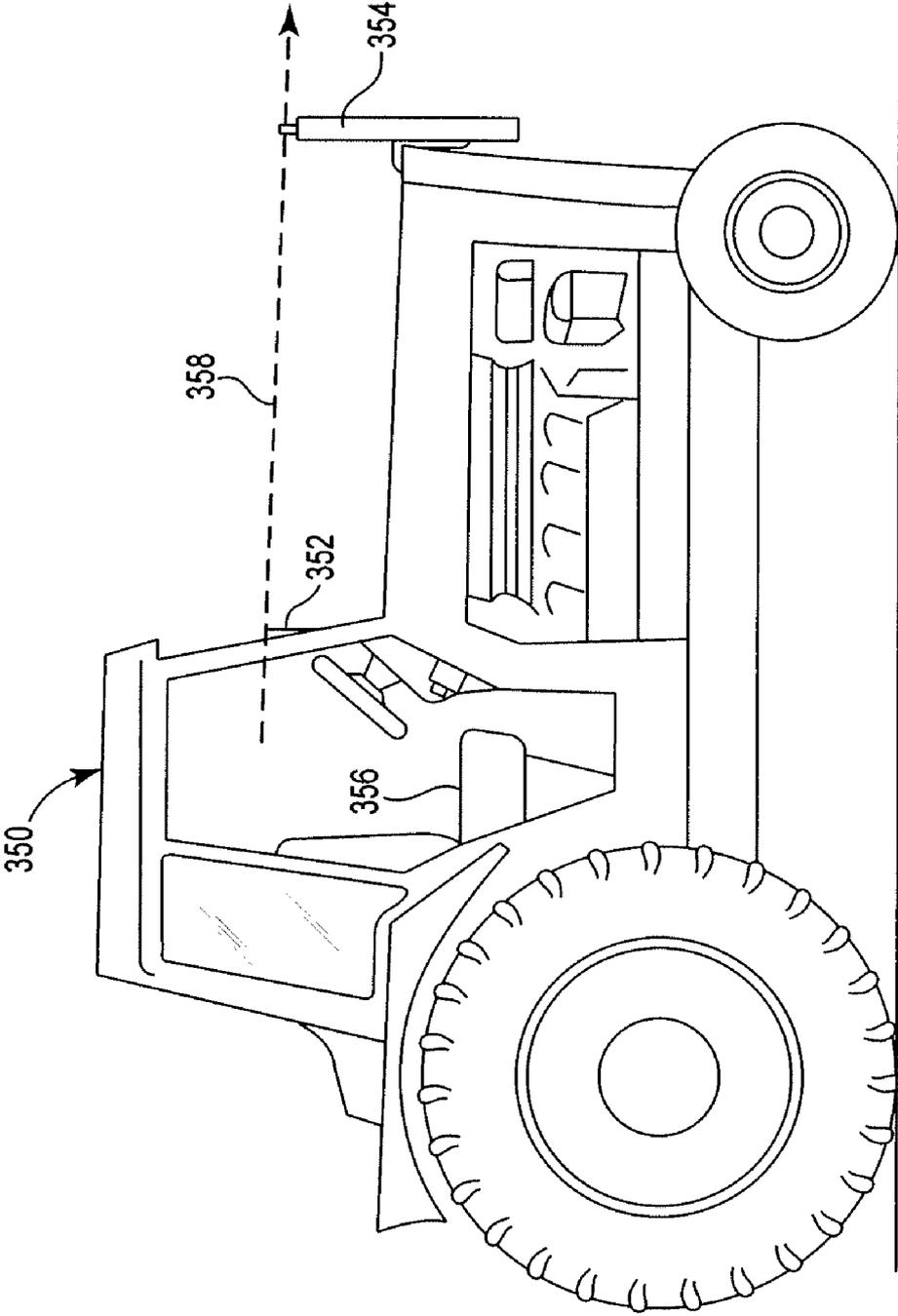


Fig. 12

EYE ALIGNMENT ASSEMBLY

RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/684,775 entitled EYE ALIGNMENT ASSEMBLY FOR TARGETING SYSTEMS, filed Jan. 8, 2010, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to an eye alignment assembly that provides an indication of orientation of a user's eye, and hence the user's body, relative to a tool. The eye alignment assembly assists the user to consistently position her body in the correct orientation relative to the tool, so that over time the tool becomes an extension of the user's body.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Humans use a wide variety of tools where the orientation of the tool relative to the user is critical to safe and effective operation. For example, the orientation of a bow or gun relative to a shooter will determine the accuracy and repeatability of a shot. Golfers spend a great deal of time positioning themselves relative to the golf ball and golf clubs in order to develop a consistent and repeatable golf swing. In board riding athletic activities, such as skiing, surfing, snowboarding, windsurfing, and the like, the posture and position of the rider relative to the board is critical. Free-hand power tools, such as drills, planners, routers and saws, operate best and safest when consistently positioned relative to the user's body.

For many tools, however, it is not possible to align the user's line of sight with an operating axis/plane of the tool. Rather, the operating axis/plane of the tool and the line of sight of the user need to converge at a particular location. For example, the operating axis of a pool cue is along the axis of the cue. The pool player does not sight along the operating axis of the pool cue. Rather, the pool player's line of sight and the operating axis of the pool cue converge, typically at the cue ball. In another example, the operating axis of a bow is co-linear with the arrow. Modern bows, however, do not permit the user to sight along the axis of the arrow. Consequently, the user must position his or her body in a fixed relationship with the bow, as a surrogate to sighting along the operating axis of the arrow.

Over time a user can develop the skill to make the tool an extension of his or her body so the operating axis/plane of the tool and the user's line of sight converge in the correct location. The current mechanisms for accelerating this learning process, however, are crude and inaccurate.

Using archery as an example, the alignment of a shot can vary dramatically depending on where the archer positions his or her head, or more particularly, his or her shooting eye relative to the bow. If the archer's eye position varies from shot to shot, so will the accuracy and direction of each respective shot, leading to inconsistent or unpredictable shooting. U.S. Pat. No. 5,850,700 proposes an eye alignment apparatus that assures that the archer's shooting eye is consistently positioned relative to the bow and the bow sight, which is hereby incorporated by reference.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present disclosure is directed to an eye alignment assembly that provides a precise indication of orientation of a

user's eye, and hence the user's body, relative to a without requiring the user to align her line of sight with an operating axis/plane of the tool. The present eye alignment assembly decouples the user's line of sight from the operating axis/plane of the tool. Therefore, the present eye alignment assembly permits the tool to operate as an extension of the user's body.

As used herein, "tool" includes any object that interfaces with a domain to facilitate more effective action. For example, tools include skis that interface with snow, a drill that interfaces with a work piece, a golf club that interfaces with a ball, etc. The operating axis/plane of a tool is located at an optimum interface between the tool and the domain. That interface is typically planar or linear. The present eye alignment assembly provides an indication of the optimum interface of the operating axis/plane of the tool, without requiring the user to align her line of sight with the operating axis/plane of the tool.

The present disclosure includes an eye alignment assembly for aligning a tool with a user. The eye alignment assembly is mounted to the tool. The eye alignment assembly includes a sight point of an optical fiber positioned a distance behind an alignment indicia on a lens. An adjustment system is provided to reposition the sight point of the optical fiber relative to the alignment indicia on the lens. The eye alignment assembly provides an indication of orientation of the user relative to the tool in at least two degrees of freedom. The adjustment system permits the present eye alignment assembly to be easily adjusted for a particular user's body style and technique for using the tool, without moving the whole eye alignment assembly.

The present eye alignment system can be used in combination with a targeting system, such as for example a bow sight. The present eye alignment system can be a discrete component or can be integrated with the targeting system. In one embodiment, the eye alignment assembly is a component of a pin sight. The adjustment system permits the eye alignment assembly to be fixedly mounted to a target system or other structure, significantly simplifying the adjustment process for a particular user's shooting style.

In operation, the alignment indicia on the lens are aligned with the sight point on the optical fiber only when a user's eye is in a predetermined relationship with respect to the eye alignment assembly, and hence, the tool to which it is mounted. When properly adjusted, the user's line of sight converges with the operating axis/plane of the tool in the optimum location.

The adjustment system permits the sight point of the optical fiber to be adjusted in at least two degrees of freedom relative to the lens. In one embodiment, the lens includes a magnification such that the sight point is only in focus and/or visible when the lens is a predetermined distance from the user. In another embodiment, the alignment indicia on the lens rotate relative to the lens to provide an indication of level (roll direction). Consequently, the present eye alignment system can provide a precise indication of orientation of a user's eye relative to a tool in all six degrees of freedom.

A luminescent material is optionally optically coupled to a proximal end of the optical fiber. The optical fiber is preferably fluorescent. In another embodiment, a portion of the optical fiber extends beyond the eye alignment assembly to collect ambient light.

The distance between the sight point of the optical fiber and the lens is preferably adjustable, to adjust the sensitivity of the eye alignment assembly. In one embodiment, the sight point is a side edge of the optical fiber treated to radiate light.

The present disclosure is also directed to tool with an alignment system mounted thereon. The eye alignment assembly includes a sight point of an optical fiber positioned a distance behind an alignment indicia on a lens. An adjustment system is provided to reposition the sight point of the optical fiber relative to the alignment indicia on the lens. The eye alignment assembly provides an indication of orientation of the user relative to the tool in at least two degrees of freedom. Examples of tools that can be used with the present eye alignment assembly include bows, firearms, golf clubs, power tools, pool cues, tractors, and snow skis.

The present disclosure is also directed to method of aligning a tool with a user. The method includes mounting the eye alignment assembly to the tool. The location of the sight point of an optical fiber is adjusted relative to the alignment indicia on a lens so the sight point appears aligned with the alignment indicia when the tool is in a predetermined orientation relative to the user. Prior to use, the user orients the tool so the sight point is aligned with the alignment indicia.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

FIGS. 1A and 1B are perspective views of a bow sight with the present eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a front view of the eye alignment assembly of FIGS. 1A and 1B viewed from a user's perspective.

FIGS. 3A and 3B illustrate an eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3C is a plan view of alignment indicia relative to a point sight for the eye alignment assembly of FIG. 3B.

FIG. 3D is an exploded view of the eye alignment assembly of FIGS. 3A and 3B coupled to a sight in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4A is a perspective view of a bow with an eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4B is a plan view of alignment indicia for the eye alignment assembly of FIG. 4A.

FIG. 5 is a side view of a golf putter with an eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 6A-6C illustrate alternate configurations of the eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a golfer using an eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of a shooter using an eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a perspective view of a skier using an eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of a power tool with an eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 11 is a side view of a pool cue with an eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 12 is a side view of a tractor with an eye alignment assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

FIGS. 1A and 1B are perspective views of eye alignment assembly 20 mounted to bow sight 22 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The bow sight 22 includes frame 24 with recess 26 sized to receive pin assembly 28 and guard 30 to protect sight pin array 32. In the illustrated embodiment, the eye alignment assembly 20 is located in a recess in the frame 24, as will be discussed in detail below.

The eye alignment assembly 20 contemplated by this disclosure is not used as a sighting or aiming device. Rather, the eye alignment assembly 20 is used in combination with the bow sight 22 to provide an indication of orientation of a user's eye relative to the bow sight 22. Over time, the user learns to quickly and accurately position his or her body and shooting eye in the same position relative to the bow sight 22, allowing for consistent shooting.

FIG. 2 is a rear view of the bow sight 22 as seen by the archer during use. The sighting pins 34 in the sight pin array 32 are visible within frame 24. Bubble level 36 is mounted in frame 24 to provide an indication of orientation of the bow sight 22 in the roll direction relative to horizontal.

Eye alignment assembly 20 is mounted in the frame 24 to provide an indication of orientation of the bow sight 22 in the pitch and yaw directions relative to the user's eye. Locating the eye alignment assembly 20 on the frame 24 permits the user to check alignment while viewing a target through opening 38 in the frame 24 that surrounds the sighting pins 34. The eye alignment assembly 20 is preferably located along axis 40 formed by the sight points 42.

In the illustrated embodiment, the eye alignment assembly 20 includes a lens 50 fixedly mounted to the frame 24. Alignment indicia 52 on the lens 50 are fixed relative to the sight 22. The initial alignment of the eye alignment assembly 20 relative to the sight 22 is preferably performed at the factory.

FIGS. 3A, 3B, 3C, and 3D illustrate one embodiment of the eye alignment assembly 20 in greater detail. Pin housing 60 supports optical fiber 62 so sight point 64 is generally aligned a fixed distance behind alignment indicia 52 on the lens 50. The sight point 64 serves as the second alignment indicia. The alignment indicia 52 can be a point, a circle, cross-hairs, or a variety of other configurations. The term "sight point" is used herein to generically refer to a portion of an optical fiber. The sight point can be one or more ends of the optical fiber or a side edge.

Sensitivity of the eye alignment assembly 20 can be adjusted by changing the distance between the sight point 64 and the lens 50. The closer the sight point 64 is to the lens 50, the more sensitive the eye alignment assembly 20 will be. Sensitivity can also be adjusted by adding magnification to the lens 50.

When alignment indicia 52 on lens 50 is aligned with sight point 64 on optical fiber 62, the user's eye is in a predetermined relationship with respect to the eye alignment assembly 20, and hence, the sight 22. That is, alignment indicia 52 and sight point 64 can only be viewed in a predetermined way from a predetermined approximate angle, assuring that the archer's shooting eye is consistently positioned relative to the illuminated sight 22.

The eye alignment assembly 20 permits adjustment of the position of the sight point 64 relative to alignment indicia 52 on the lens 50 along axes 70, 72. The adjustment system permits the eye alignment assembly 20 to be easily adjusted for the shooting style of a particular shooter.

FIG. 3A illustrates an assembly 74 that permits adjustment along the axis 70. Slide portion 76 of the pin housing 60 slides

5

in slot 78 of the support block 80. Adjustment screw 82 and spring 84 permit adjustment of the pin housing 60 and the optical fiber 62 along the axis 70.

FIG. 3D illustrates adjustment mechanism 90 for the axis 72. The assembly 74 of FIG. 3A is positioned in recess 92 in the frame 24 so sight point 64 is located generally behind lens 50. Guide pin 94 retains the assembly 74 within the recess 92, but permits limited motion of the support block 80 along the axis 72 within the recess 92. Spring 96 biases the support block 80 toward the bottom of the recess 92, while screw 98 permit the support block 80 to be raised and lowered within the recess 92.

In one embodiment, the assembly 74 is permitted to rotate a small amount around guide pin 94 to adjust the distance between the sight point 64 and the lens 50. This feature permits the sensitivity of the eye alignment assembly 20 to be adjusted. In another embodiment, hole 95 in support block 80 is replaced with a slot (see e.g., slot 78) to permit forward and rearward movement of the assembly 74 along axis 97. An adjustment screw, such as the adjustment screw 82, can be provided for adjusting the location of the assembly 74 along the axis 97.

Rotating the screws 82, 98 moves the location of the sight point 64 relative to the indicia 52 on the lens 50 along the axes 70, 72 so the present eye alignment assembly 20 can be fine tuned for the particular shooting style, body shape, and other variable particular to the user.

The lens 50 can have a convex or a concave curvature on both of its sides, with the specific configuration of the lens variables, such as for example, the radii of curvature of the respective surfaces, the index of refraction, and the thickness of the lens, determining its characteristics, such as its focal length and magnification. By manipulating these variables, it is possible to create a lens 50 in which the alignment indicia 64 is not visible or not in focus when viewed by a human eye that is not in the proper or desired location relative to the sight 22. Therefore, it is possible to make an eye alignment assembly 20 with single alignment indicia.

In another embodiment, the lens 50 is coated with an opaque material that block light from the sight point 64, except in the center of the alignment indicia 52. Consequently, the user cannot see the sight point 64 unless he or her eye is in a predetermined relationship with respect to the sight 22. Luminescent material 100 is optionally optically coupled to proximal end 102 of the optical fiber 62.

FIG. 4A illustrates an embodiment of an eye alignment assembly 120 combined with bow 122 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In the illustrate embodiment, the eye alignment assembly 120 is fixedly mounted to bow 122. Alternatively, the eye alignment assembly 120 can be mounted to a bow sight. The eye alignment assembly 120 includes tubular housing 124 that contains an eye alignment assembly, such as illustrate in FIG. 3B.

In the illustrated embodiment, the bow 122 includes a series of sight pins 123 along with the user's line of sight 125 extends to a target. The operating axis/plane 127 of the bow 122, however, is located below the user's line of sight 125. The user's line of sight 125 is not co-linear with the operating axis/plane 127 of the bow 122.

Adjustment screws 126, 128 on the housing 124 permit adjustment of the position of the sight point 64 relative to alignment indicia 52 on the lens 50 along the axes 70, 72, as illustrated in FIG. 9C. The eye alignment assembly 120 can be adjusted to provide an indication of orientation of a user's eye, without needing to adjust the position of the housing 124.

The present eye alignment assembly 120 can provide an indication of the user's eye relative to the bow 122 in along the

6

X-axis 130, the Y-axis 132, the Z-axis 134, as well as in pitch 136 and yaw 138 relative to the bow 122. Position along the Y-axis is typically proved by using a lens 50 with a particular focal length such that the sight point 64 is visible and/or in focus, only at a particular distance along the Y-axis 132. Roll position 140 is typically indicated by level 36.

FIG. 4B is a plan view of an alternate eye alignment assembly 150 that provided an indication of eye position in all six degrees of freedom in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In particular, indicia 152 is permitted to rotate 154 around center of lens 156 to provide an indication of the user's eye relative to the bow 122 in the roll direction 140 (i.e., rotation around the Y-axis 132). For example, the indicia 152 may be located in a cavity containing a fluid. Under the force of gravity the indicia 152 self-levels as illustrated in FIG. 4B. Dashed line 158 on lens 156 provides an indication that the rotating indicia 152 is level (i.e., degree of rotation around the Y-axis 132) with respect to the eye alignment assembly 150. By using a lens 156 with a focal length that permits the sight point 160 to be visible and/or in focus only at a particular distance along the Y-axis 132, the eye alignment assembly 150 operates in all six degrees of freedom 130, 132, 134, 136, 138, 140.

FIG. 5 illustrates an alternate eye alignment assemblies 170, 172 mounted on golf putter 174 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. When putting it is desirable for the user's eye 176 to be vertically over the golf ball 178 and in alignment with the desired path 180 of the ball 178. Eye alignment assembly 170 is preferably located on the club head 182 above the point of impact with the ball 178. Secondary eye alignment assembly 172 is optionally located on the club shaft 184 to provide an indication of the shaft orientation relative to the user.

FIG. 6A illustrates an alternate eye alignment assembly 200 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Indicia 202 on lens 204 is an annular ring. Secondary indicia 206 is located behind sight point 208. As illustrated in the left-hand frame, the alignment is achieved by centering the sight point 208 over the secondary indicia 206.

FIGS. 6B and 6C illustrate another alternate eye alignment assemblies 210A, 210B in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Secondary indicia 212A, 212B are located behind sight lines 214A, 214B. The sight lines 214A, 214B can be a plurality of ends of optical fibers aligned to form a line structure or a side surface of an optical fiber treated to radiate light. As illustrated in the left-hand frame, the alignment is achieved by centering the sight lines 214A, 214B over the secondary indicia 212A, 212B.

FIG. 7 illustrates an eye alignment assembly 220 mounted to golf club 222 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Wood or iron shots require that the golfer's eyes 224 be at a pre-determinable angle with respect to vertical 226. It is preferable that this angle remain constant for each club that the golfer uses. If the eyes 224 are not properly aligned with golf club head 228 for any given shot, a parallax problem is introduced, which is worse if the eyes 224 are not in the vertical plane 230 of the ball's 232 expected flight, where the vertical plane 230 corresponds to the operating axis/plane of the golf club 222. Parallax requires the golfer to continually make compensations from shot to shot, which introduce additional variables in the golf swing.

The eye alignment assembly 220 aligns with golfer's eyes 224 with respect to the club head 228 at the desired orientation. As a result, even inexperienced golfers can quickly learn to consistently position their body with respect to the golf club 222 and the ball 232, accelerating the learning process.

In an alternate embodiment, the eye alignment assembly 220 is located on the shaft 234 of the golf club 222.

FIG. 8 illustrates an eye alignment assembly 240 mounted to a firearm 242 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Firearm 242 includes a conventional sight 244 on barrel 246 that is aligned with user's shooting eye 248. When sighting along the barrel 246, the user's line of sight is generally parallel to, and very close to, the operating axis/plane 254 of the firearm 242. In some circumstances, however, there may be insufficient time to sight the weapon 242 with the sight 244. The user 246 must simply point the weapon 242 at target 250 and fire.

The eye alignment assembly 240 permits the user 252 to practice orienting the firearm 252 at a fixed orientation with respect to his body 250. By properly adjusting the eye alignment assembly 252, operating axis/plane 254 of the firearm 242 converges at the target 250 with the user's line of sight 256. Over time muscle memory will be developed and the user 252 will be able to sight the weapon 242 without use of sight 244. The weapon 242 becomes an extension of the user's 252 body, greatly accelerating the aiming process.

The technique illustrated in FIG. 8 applies to any tool, whether sporting equipment or work tools, such as drills, routers, and the like. The user can either actively align his or her body with the tool using the eye alignment assembly or can rely on muscle memory developed from using the present eye alignment assembly as a reference guide.

The present eye alignment assembly can also be used in dynamic interfaces with tools. FIG. 9 illustrates a pair of eye alignment assemblies 270, 272 mounted to tips of skis 274, 276. Each ski 274, 276 defines its own operating axis/plane with the snow. The eye alignment assemblies 270, 272 are adjusted to provide an indication of the user's 278 body position relative to the operating axes/planes of skis 274, 276.

FIG. 10 illustrates power tool 300 with an eye alignment assembly 302 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In the illustrated embodiment, the power tool 300 is a battery powered oscillating saw 300 used to prepare bone 304 to receive an orthopedic implant. The operating axis/plane of the power tool 300 is plane 305 containing blade 306 during oscillates along arc 307.

Surgeons frequently prepare bones using such power tools 300 freehand, without a cutting guide. The present eye alignment assembly 302 provides an indication of the orientation of the blade 306 relative to the surgeon, without the surgeon needing to sight along the operating axis/plane 305 of the power tool 300.

In another embodiment, the orientation of the bone 304 is known and the eye alignment assembly 302 can be adjusted so the blade 306 is in the proper orientation to make the cut 308. In yet another embodiment, a second eye alignment assembly 310 is temporarily attached to the bone 304, such as by using a K-wire. The two eye alignment assemblies 302, 310 can be adjusted so the blade 306 is in the proper orientation relative to the bone 304.

FIG. 11 illustrates a pool cue 320 with an eye alignment assembly 322 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The eye alignment assembly 322 permits the user 324 to consistently and accurately position her body with respect to the pool cue 320 and the ball 326, without needing to sight along the operating axis/plane 328 of the pool cue 320.

FIG. 12 illustrates tractor 350 with an eye alignment assembly 352 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Tractor users generally rely on a sighting device 354, such as for example a hood ornament, located at the end of the hood to center the tractor 350 relative to crop

rows. This sighting approach is dependent on the user being consistently positioned relative to the sighting device 354. If the user moves in the seat 356, the alignment with the sighting device 354 changes and the tractor 350 can get off track. The present eye alignment assembly 352 provides the user an indication of her position relative to the tractor 350, so it is possible to consistently and accurately sight off the hood ornament 354. Consequently, the user's line of sight 358 is consistently positioned relative to the tractor 350 and the sighting device 354.

Where a range of values is provided, it is understood that each intervening value, to the tenth of the unit of the lower limit unless the context clearly dictates otherwise, between the upper and lower limit of that range and any other stated or intervening value in that stated range is encompassed within the inventions. The upper and lower limits of these smaller ranges which may independently be included in the smaller ranges is also encompassed within the inventions, subject to any specifically excluded limit in the stated range. Where the stated range includes one or both of the limits, ranges excluding either both of those included limits are also included in the inventions.

Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which these inventions belong. Although any methods and materials similar or equivalent to those described herein can also be used in the practice or testing of the present inventions, the preferred methods and materials are now described. All patents and publications mentioned herein, including those cited in the Background of the application, are hereby incorporated by reference to disclose and described the methods and/or materials in connection with which the publications are cited.

The publications discussed herein are provided solely for their disclosure prior to the filing date of the present application. Nothing herein is to be construed as an admission that the present inventions are not entitled to antedate such publication by virtue of prior invention. Further, the dates of publication provided may be different from the actual publication dates which may need to be independently confirmed.

Other embodiments of the invention are possible. Although the description above contains much specificity, these should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention, but as merely providing illustrations of some of the presently preferred embodiments of this invention. It is also contemplated that various combinations or sub-combinations of the specific features and aspects of the embodiments may be made and still fall within the scope of the inventions. It should be understood that various features and aspects of the disclosed embodiments can be combined with or substituted for one another in order to form varying modes of the disclosed inventions. Thus, it is intended that the scope of at least some of the present inventions herein disclosed should not be limited by the particular disclosed embodiments described above.

Thus the scope of this invention should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents. Therefore, it will be appreciated that the scope of the present invention fully encompasses other embodiments which may become obvious to those skilled in the art, and that the scope of the present invention is accordingly to be limited by nothing other than the appended claims, in which reference to an element in the singular is not intended to mean "one and only one" unless explicitly so stated, but rather "one or more." All structural, chemical, and functional equivalents to the elements of the above-described preferred embodiment that are known to those of ordinary skill in the art are expressly

incorporated herein by reference and are intended to be encompassed by the present claims. Moreover, it is not necessary for a device or method to address each and every problem sought to be solved by the present invention, for it to be encompassed by the present claims. Furthermore, no element, component, or method step in the present disclosure is intended to be dedicated to the public regardless of whether the element, component, or method step is explicitly recited in the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An eye alignment assembly for aligning a tool with a user, the eye alignment assembly comprising:

an eye alignment assembly mounted to the tool, the eye alignment assembly comprising a sight point of an optical fiber positioned a distance behind an alignment indicia on a lens; and

an adjustment system adapted to reposition the sight point of the optical fiber relative to the alignment indicia on the lens, the eye alignment assembly providing an indication of orientation of the user relative to the tool in at least two degrees of freedom.

2. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the eye alignment assembly decouples the user's line of sight from an operating axis/plane of the tool.

3. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the eye alignment assembly provides an indication of orientation of the user relative to the tool without aligning the user's line of sight with an operating axis/plane of the tool.

4. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the eye alignment assembly provides an indication of an optimum interface of an operating plane/axis of the tool with a domain.

5. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the adjustment system permits the sight point of the optical fiber to be adjusted in at least two degrees of freedom relative to the lens.

6. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the lens includes a magnification such that the sight point is only in focus when the lens is a predetermined distance from the user.

7. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the alignment indicia rotates relative to the lens to provide an indication of level.

8. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the alignment indicia on the lens is aligned with the sight point on the optical fiber only when the user is in a predetermined relationship with respect to the tool.

9. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 comprising a luminescent material optically coupled to a proximal end of the optical fiber.

10. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the optical fiber is fluorescent.

11. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein a portion of the optical fiber extends beyond the eye alignment assembly to collect ambient light.

12. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 comprising an indication of the user relative to the tool in the pitch and yaw directions.

13. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 comprising an indication of the user in six degrees of freedom relative to the tool.

14. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the eye alignment assembly provides an indication of orientation of the user relative to the tool in at least three degrees of freedom.

15. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the distance between the sight point of the optical fiber and the lens is adjustable.

16. The eye alignment assembly of claim 1 wherein the sight point comprises a side edge of the optical fiber treated to radiate light.

17. A alignment system comprising:
a tool;

an eye alignment assembly mounted to the tool, the eye alignment assembly comprising a sight point of an optical fiber positioned a distance behind an alignment indicia on a lens; and

an adjustment system adapted to reposition the sight point of the optical fiber relative to the alignment indicia on the lens, the eye alignment assembly providing an indication of orientation of the user relative to the tool in at least two degrees of freedom.

18. The alignment system of claim 17 wherein the tool is selected from one of a bow, a firearm, a golf club, power tools, pool cue, tractor, or snow skis.

19. A method of aligning a tool with a user, the method comprising the steps of:

mounting to the tool an eye alignment assembly including an optical fiber and a lens with an alignment indicia;

adjusting a location of the sight point of an optical fiber relative to the alignment indicia on a lens so the sight point appears aligned with the alignment indicia when the tool is in a predetermined orientation relative to the user; and

orienting the tool relative to the user prior to use so the sight point is aligned with the alignment indicia.

20. The method of claim 19 comprising the step of orienting the tool in at least two degrees of freedom relative to the user prior to use.

21. The method of claim 19 comprising the step of orienting the tool in six degrees of freedom relative to the user prior to use.

22. The method of claim 19 wherein the alignment indicia is permitted to rotate relative to the lens, the method comprising the step of determining a roll position of the tool prior to use.

23. The method of claim 19 comprising the step of adjusting a distance between the sight point of the optical fiber and the lens.

* * * * *