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(54) **BATTERY PACK**

(71) Applicant: **MAKITA CORPORATION**, Anjo-shi (JP)

(72) Inventors: **Toru YAMADA**, Anjo-shi (JP); **Hideyuki TAGA**, Anjo-shi (JP)

(73) Assignee: **MAKITA CORPORATION**, Anjo-shi (JP)

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A plurality of battery cells of a battery pack may include at least one first battery cell arranged in a first row, at least one second battery cell arranged in a second row adjacent to the first row, at least one third battery cell arranged in a third row adjacent to the second row, and at least one fourth battery cell arranged in a fourth row adjacent to the third row. The at least one first battery cell and the at least one second battery cell are connected in series. Each of the at least one first battery cell is connected in parallel with a corresponding one of the at least one third battery cell. Each of the at least one second battery cell is connected in parallel with a corresponding one of the at least one fourth battery cell.

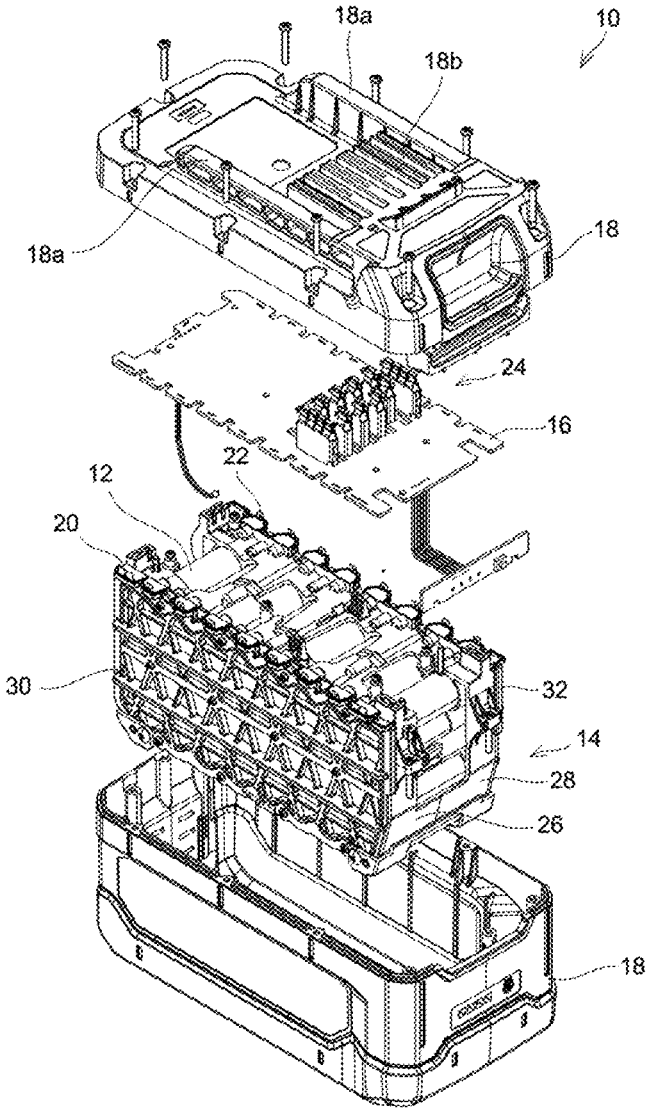


FIG. 1

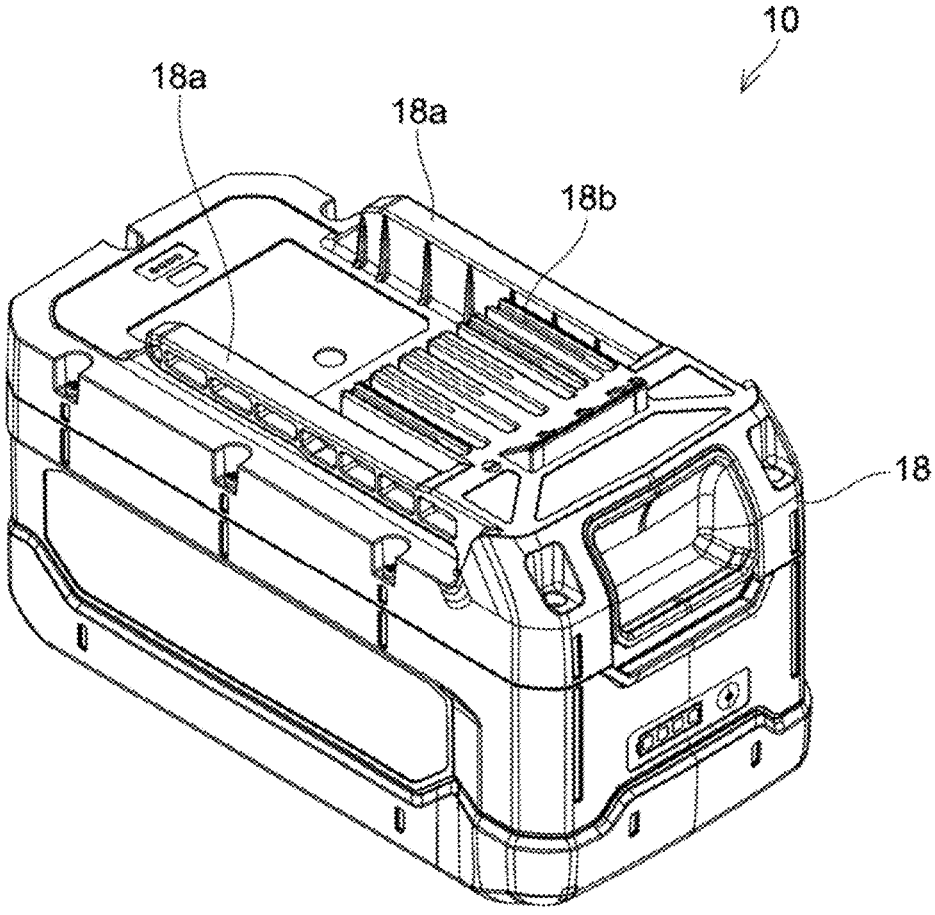
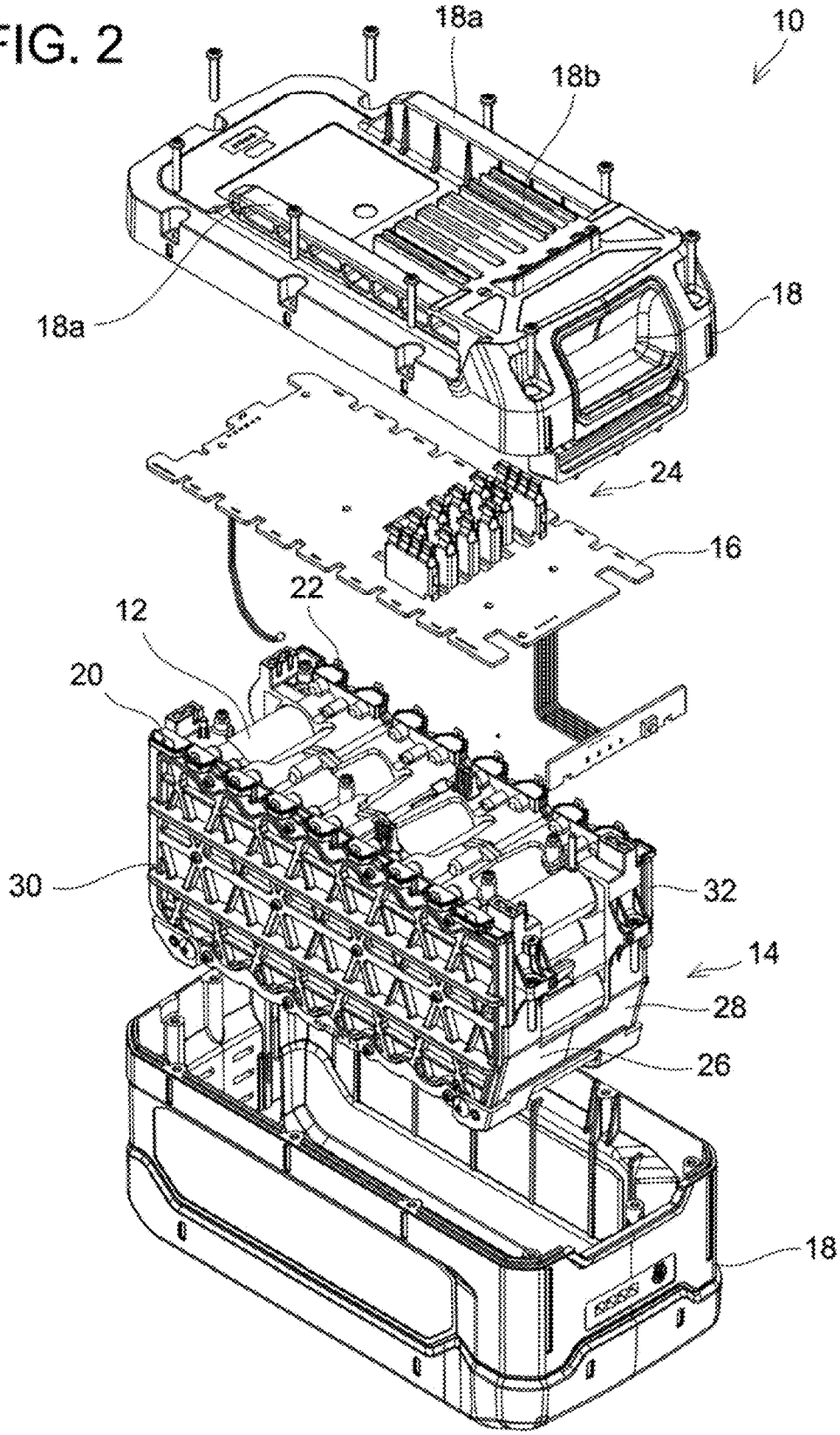


FIG. 2



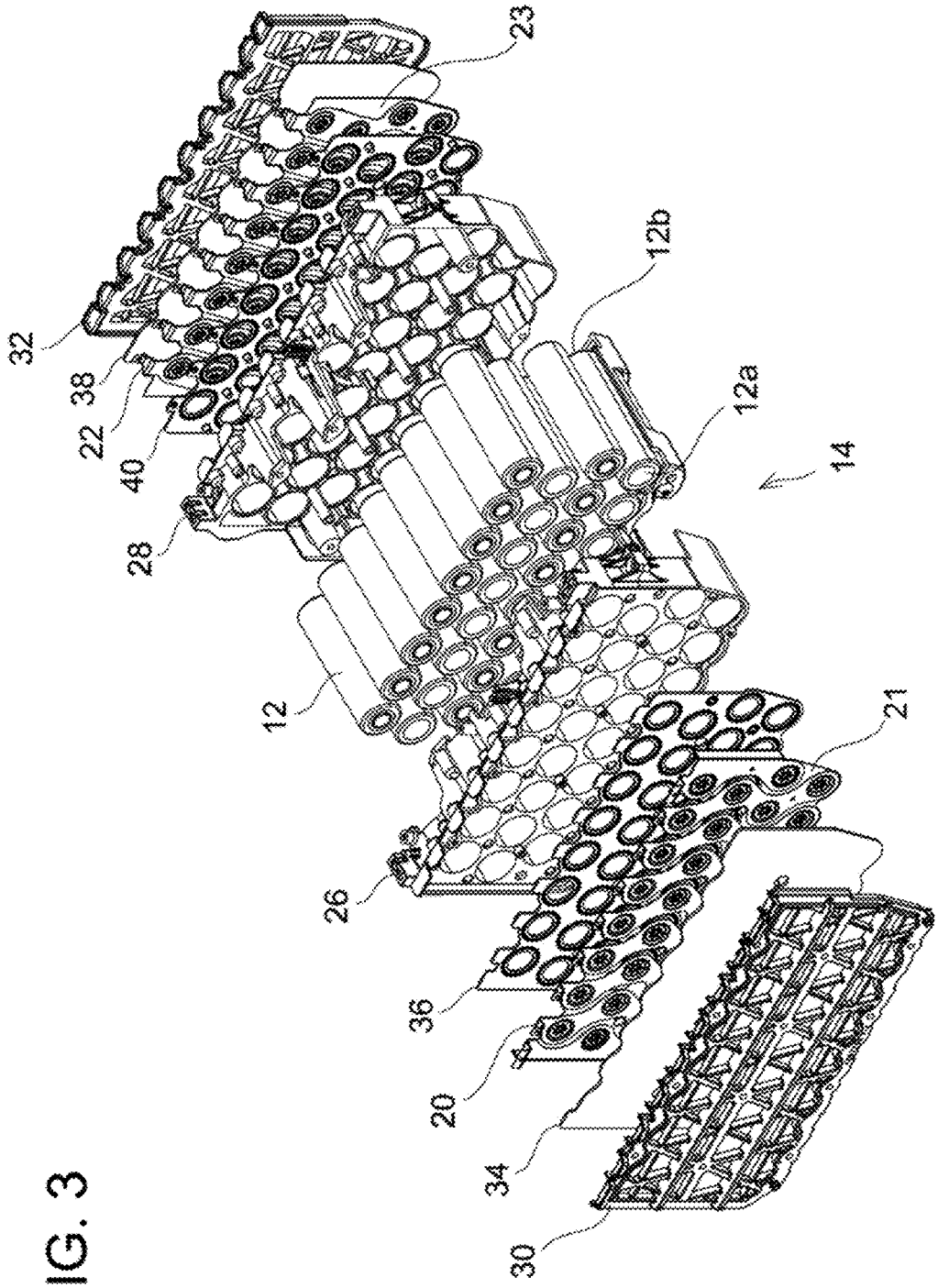


FIG. 3

FIG. 4

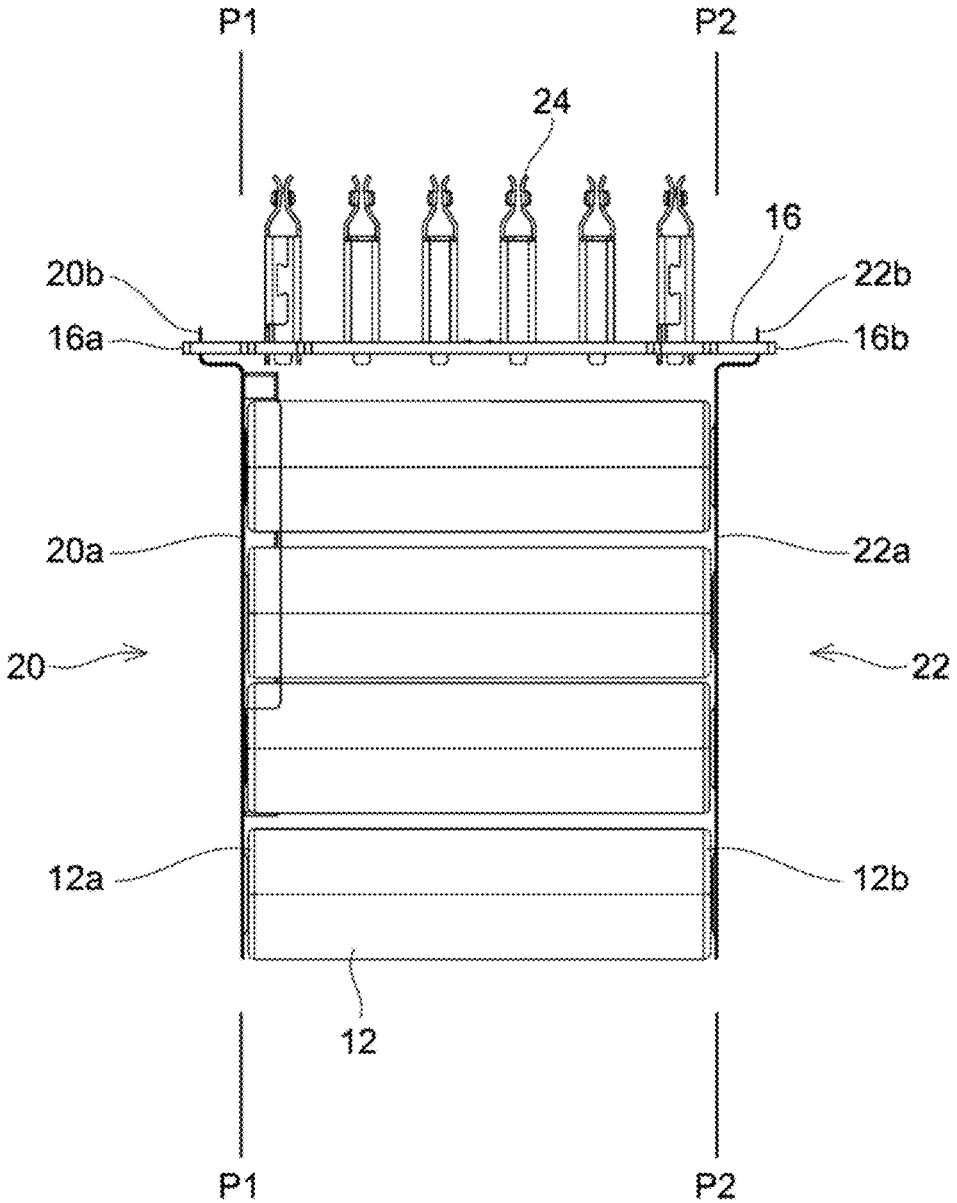


FIG. 5

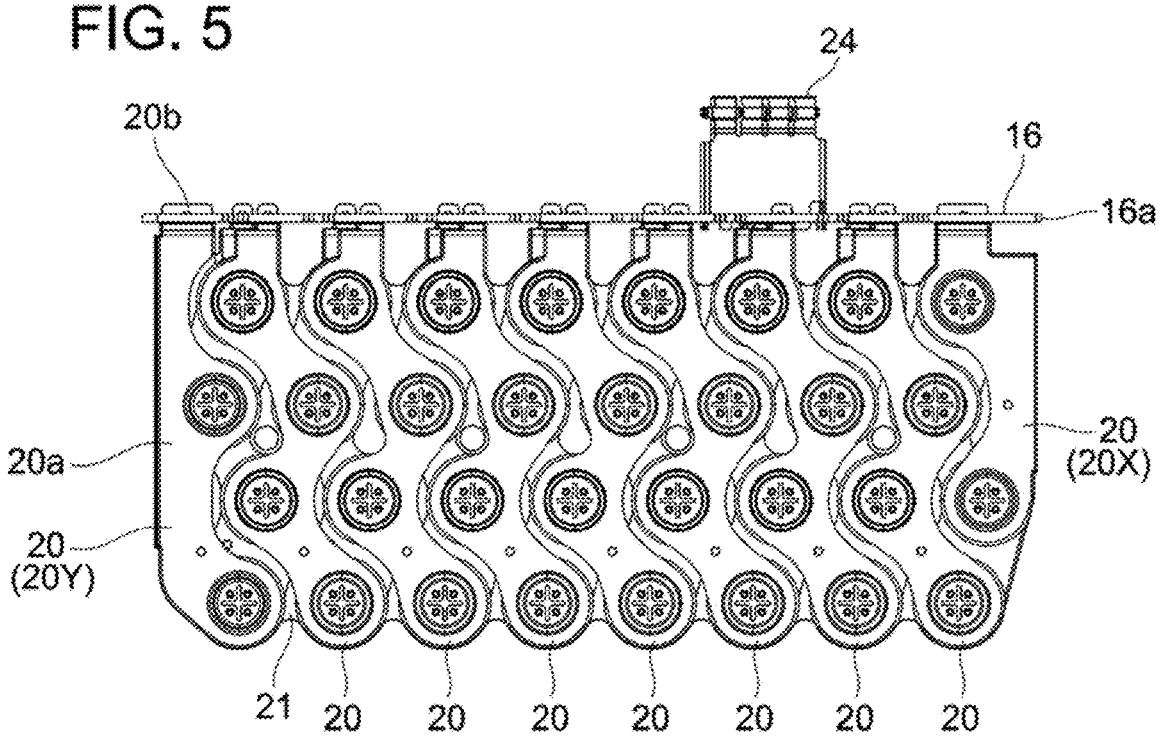

24
20b
16
16a
20a
20
(20X)
20
(20Y)
21
20
20
20
20
20
20
20

FIG. 6

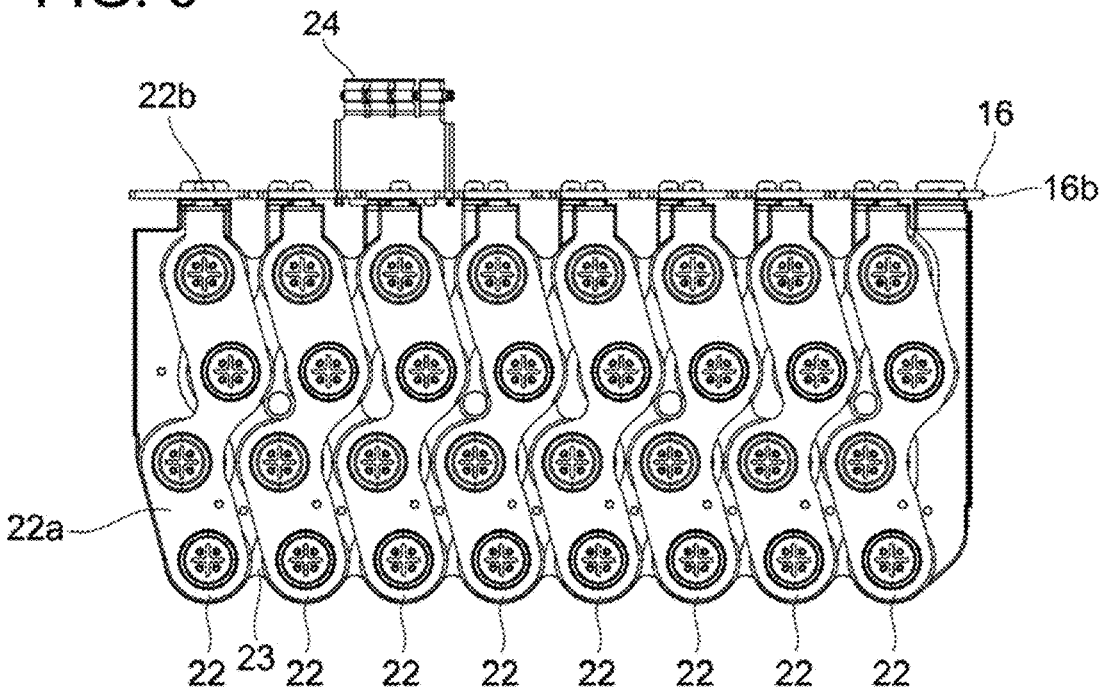

24
22b
16
16b
22a
22
23
22
22
22
22
22
22
22

FIG. 7

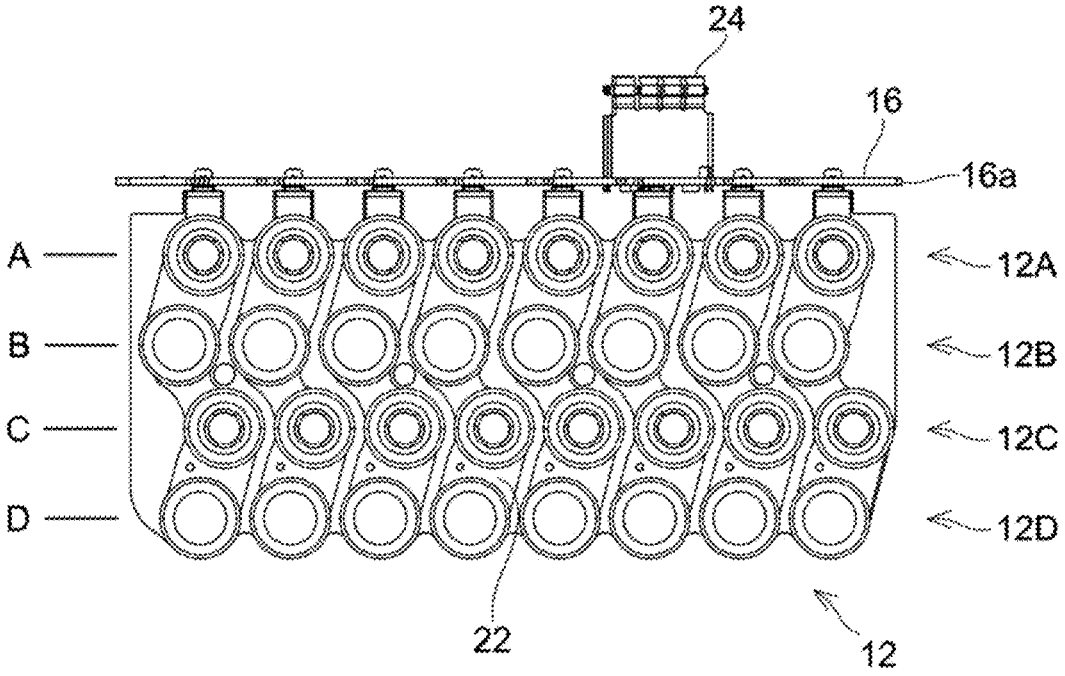


FIG. 8

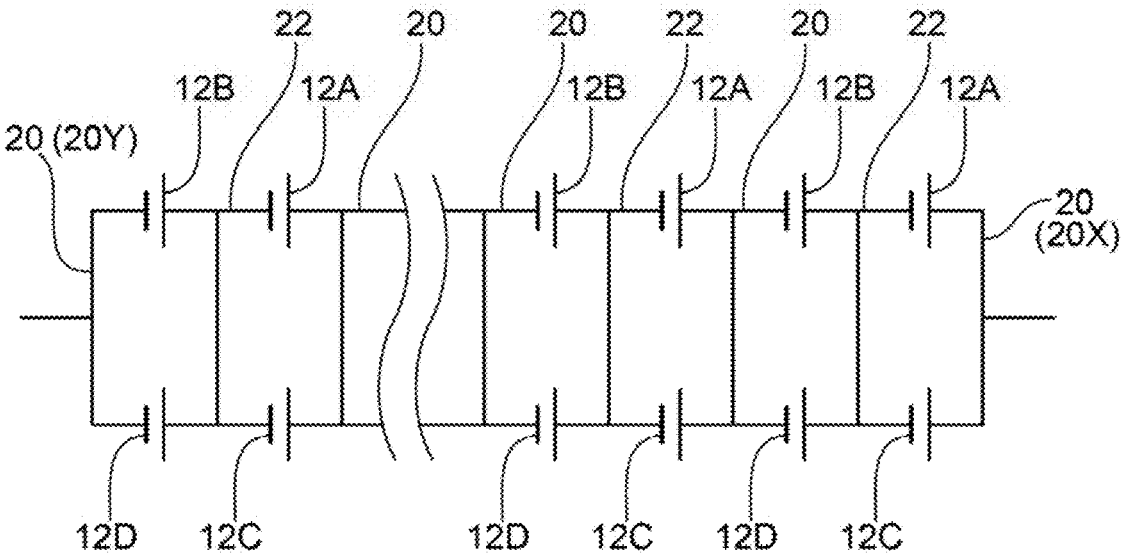

22
20
20
22
20
22
12B
12A
12B
12A
12B
12A
20 (20Y)
20
(20X)
12D
12C
12D
12C
12D
12C

FIG. 9

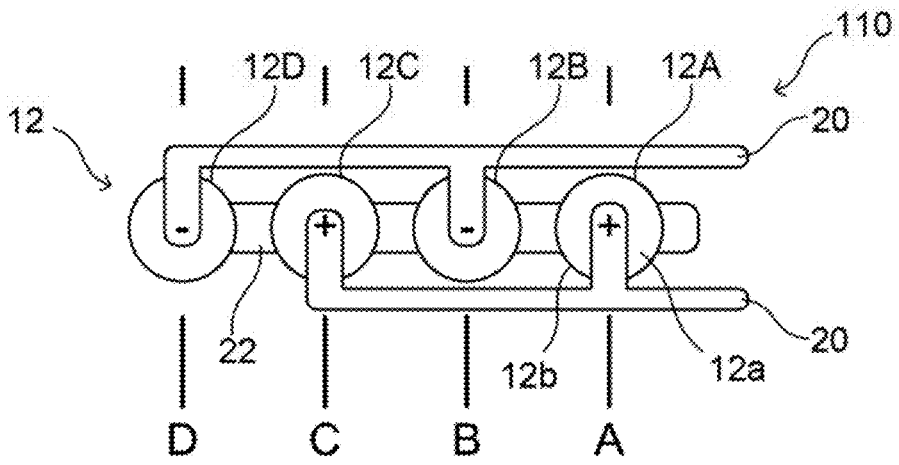

110
12D
12C
12B
12A
12
20
-
+
-
+
22
12b
12a
20
D
C
B
A

FIG. 10

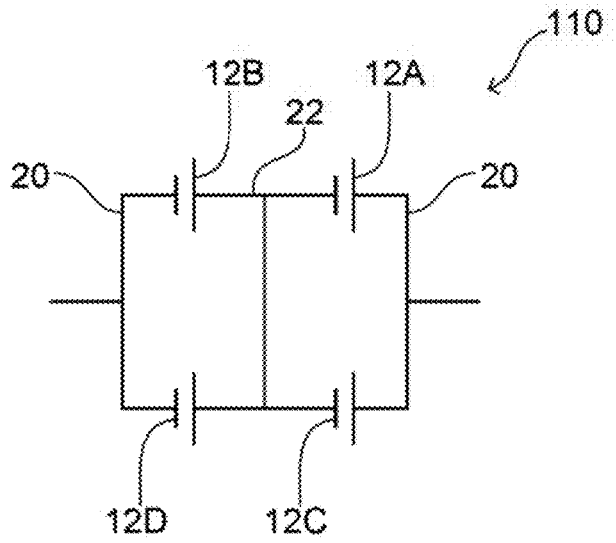

110
12B
12A
22
20
20
12D
12C

FIG. 11

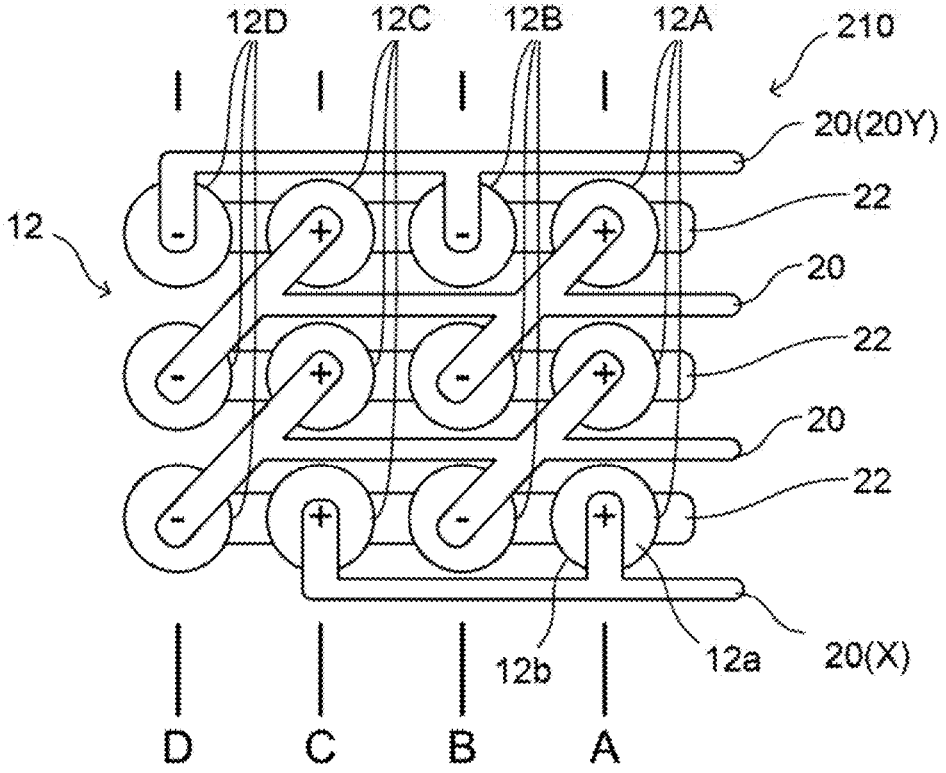

12D
12C
12B
12A
210
20(20Y)
22
12
20
22
20
22
12b
12a
20(X)
D
C
B
A

FIG. 12

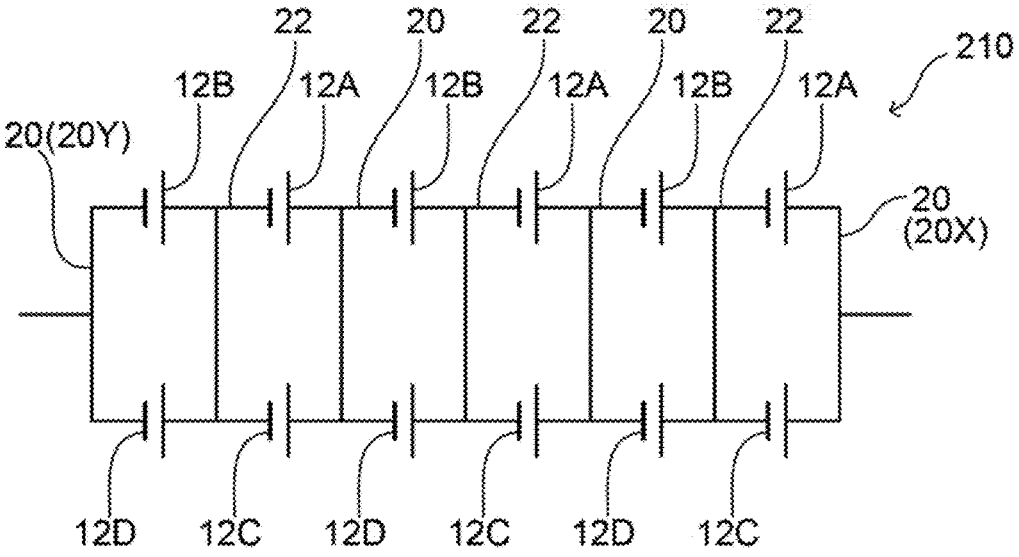

22
20
22
20
22
210
12B
12A
12B
12A
12B
12A
20(20Y)
20
(20X)
12D
12C
12D
12C
12D
12C

FIG. 13

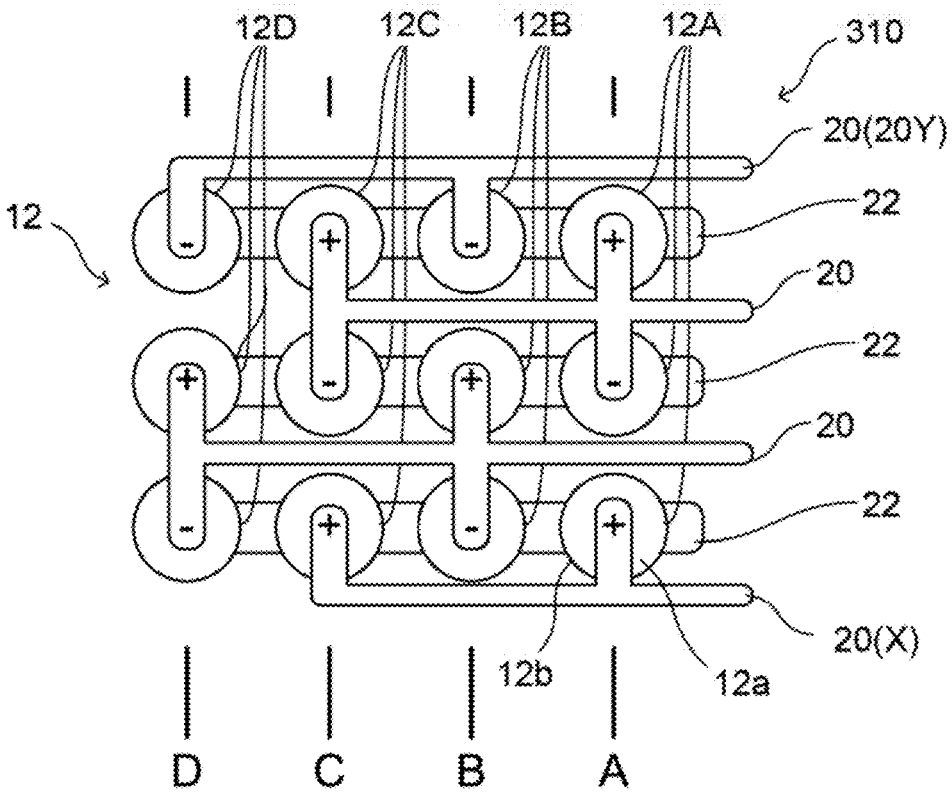
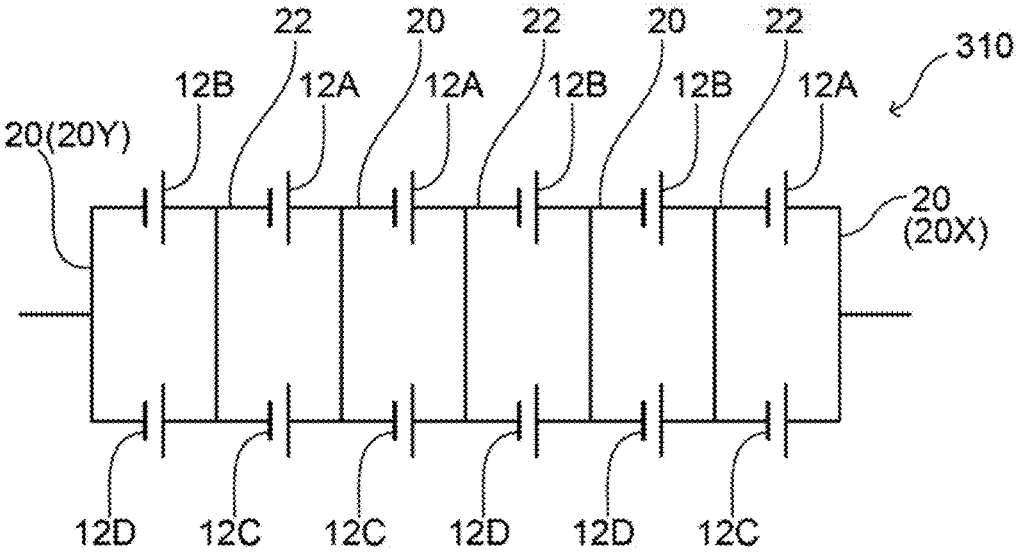

12D
12C
12B
12A
310
20(20Y)
12
22
20
22
20
22
20(X)
12b
12a
D
C
B
A

FIG. 14


22
20
22
20
22
310
12B
12A
12A
12B
12B
12A
20(20Y)
20
(20X)
12D
12C
12C
12D
12D
12C

BATTERY PACK

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 2018-225403, filed on Nov. 30, 2018 the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The art disclosed herein relates to a battery pack used in electrical equipment such as a power tool.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2012-99307 describes a battery pack. This battery pack includes a plurality of battery cells supported parallel to each other and a plurality of lead plates that electrically connects the plurality of battery cells. Each of the battery cells is connected in parallel with at least one battery cell and is connected in series with other battery cells.

SUMMARY

[0004] Typically, a plurality of battery cells is arranged in proximity to each other to reduce a size of a battery pack. When two battery cells connected in parallel are arranged adjacent to each other in such a plurality of battery cells, when a short circuit occurs in one of the battery cells, the other healthy battery cell could be damaged. That is, when a short circuit occurs in one of the battery cells, the other battery cell is also short circuited through this failed battery cell. As a result, when a short circuit occurs in one of the battery cells, large current flows in both of the two battery cells connected in parallel. In such a condition, when those two battery cells are arranged adjacent to each other, the healthy battery is heated not only by heat which the healthy battery itself generated but also by heat transmitted from the short-circuited battery cell. As a result, the healthy battery pack could be damaged due to its temperature rising excessively. The description herein provides an art that at least partially solves such a problem.

[0005] A battery pack disclosed herein may comprise a plurality of battery cells supported parallel to each other and a plurality of lead plates electrically connecting the plurality of battery cells. Each battery cell comprises a first end facing a first plane and a second end facing a second plane parallel to the first plane. The plurality of lead plate includes at least one first lead plate arranged along the first plane and at least one second lead plate arranged along the second plane. The plurality of battery cells includes at least one first battery cell arranged in a first row, at least one second battery cell arranged in a second row adjacent to the first row, at least one third battery cell arranged in a third row adjacent to the second row, and at least one fourth battery cell arranged in a fourth row adjacent to the third row. The at least one first battery cell and the at least one second battery cell are connected in series. Each of the at least one first battery cell is connected in parallel with corresponding one of the at least one third battery cell, and each of the at least one second battery cell is connected in parallel with corresponding one of the at least one fourth battery cell.

[0006] According to the aforementioned configuration, any two battery cells connected in parallel with each other can be prohibited from being arranged adjacent to each other. Due to this, when a short circuit occurs in one of the battery cells, the battery cell correspondingly connected in parallel with this battery cell can be suppressed from being damaged.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0007] FIG. **1** is a perspective view of an outer appearance of a battery pack **10** of a first embodiment.

[0008] FIG. **2** is a disassembled view of the battery pack **10**.

[0009] FIG. **3** is a disassembled view of a battery holder **14**.

[0010] FIG. **4** is a front view showing a positional relationship of a plurality of battery cells **12**, a plurality of lead plates **20**, **22**, and a circuit board **16**. Depiction of the battery holder **14** is omitted in FIGS. **4** to **7**.

[0011] FIG. **5** is a left-side view showing the positional relationship of the plurality of battery cells **12**, the plurality of lead plates **20**, **22**, and the circuit board **16**.

[0012] FIG. **6** is a right-side view showing the positional relationship of the plurality of battery cells **12**, the plurality of lead plates **20**, **22**, and the circuit board **16**.

[0013] FIG. **7** is a view with the plurality of lead plates **20** removed from the left-side view of FIG. **5**.

[0014] FIG. **8** is a circuit diagram showing an electrical connection configuration of the plurality of battery cells **12**.

[0015] FIG. **9** schematically shows a configuration of a battery pack **110** of a second embodiment.

[0016] FIG. **10** is a circuit diagram showing an electrical connection configuration of a plurality of battery cells **12** of the battery pack **110** of the second embodiment.

[0017] FIG. **11** schematically shows a configuration of a battery pack **210** of a third embodiment.

[0018] FIG. **12** is a circuit diagram showing an electrical connection configuration of a plurality of battery cells **12** of the battery pack **210** of the third embodiment.

[0019] FIG. **13** schematically shows a configuration of a battery pack **310** of a fourth embodiment.

[0020] FIG. **14** is a circuit diagram showing an electrical connection configuration of a plurality of battery cells **12** of the battery pack **310** of the fourth embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0021] In an embodiment of the art disclosed herein, at least one first battery cell may include a plurality of first battery cells arranged in a first row, and at least one third battery cell may include a plurality of third battery cells arranged in a third row.

[0022] In addition to the above or as an alternative thereof, at least one second battery cell may include a plurality of second battery cells arranged in a second row, and at least one fourth battery cell may include a plurality of fourth battery cells arranged in a fourth row.

[0023] In an embodiment of the art disclosed herein, the plurality of first battery cells and the plurality of second battery cells may be connected in series to each other in one-by-one pairs. However, as another embodiment, the plurality of first battery cells and the plurality of second battery cells may be connected in series to each other in two-by-two pairs or in pairs with each pair including larger numbers of the first batteries and the second batteries. In a circuit structure in which the plurality of first battery cells

and the plurality of second battery cells are connected in series, a positional relationship of the first battery cells and the second battery cells (that is, orders of arrangement thereof) may suitably be designed.

[0024] In an embodiment of the art disclosed herein, each of the plurality of first battery cells and the plurality of third battery cells may comprise a positive electrode at its first end and a negative electrode at its second end. That is, the plurality of first battery cells and the plurality of third battery cells may be oriented in a same direction as each other. In addition, each of the plurality of second battery cells and the plurality of fourth battery cells may comprise a negative electrode at its first end and a positive electrode at its second end. That is, the plurality of second battery cells and the plurality of fourth battery cells may be oriented in a same direction as each other and oriented in a different direction from the plurality of first battery cells and the plurality of third battery cells.

[0025] In the aforementioned embodiments, a plurality of first lead plates may include one or more first multi-row lead plates. In this case, each first multi-row lead plate may be connected to the positive electrode of one of the plurality of first battery cells, the negative electrode of one of the plurality of second battery cells, the positive electrode of one of the plurality of third battery cells, and the negative electrode of one of the plurality of fourth battery cells.

[0026] In the aforementioned embodiment, the plurality of first multi-row lead plates may be arranged in a direction parallel to the first row. Such a configuration can prevent two or more first multi-row lead plates from intersecting each other.

[0027] In the aforementioned embodiments, the plurality of first multi-row lead plates may have a same shape and may be arranged in a same posture as each other. Such a configuration can facilitate a structure of the battery pack is simplified, and design and manufacture thereof.

[0028] In an embodiment of the art disclosed herein, a part of or all of configurations of the aforementioned plurality of first lead plates may be employed similarly to a plurality of second lead plates. That is, the plurality of second lead plates may include one or more second multi-row lead plates. In this case, each second multi-row lead plate may be connected to the negative electrode of one of the plurality of first battery cells, the positive electrode of one of the plurality of second battery cells, the negative electrode of one of the plurality of third battery cells, and the positive electrode of one of the plurality of fourth battery cells.

[0029] In the aforementioned embodiments, the plurality of second multi-row lead plates may be arranged in the direction parallel to the first row. Such a configuration can prevent two or more second multi-row lead plates from intersecting each other.

[0030] In the aforementioned embodiments, the plurality of second multi-row lead plates may have a same shape and may be arranged in a same posture as each other. Such a configuration can simplify the structure of the battery pack and facilitate the design and manufacture thereof.

[0031] In the aforementioned embodiments, the shape of the second multi-row lead plate(s) may be different from the shape of the first multi-row lead plate(s). That is, the shape of the first multi-row lead plate(s) and the shape of the second multi-row lead plate(s) may be designed independently of each other.

[0032] In an embodiment of the art disclosed herein, the plurality of battery cells may be arranged in a staggered arrangement. For example, when the first battery cells in the first row are moved vertically toward the second row, the first battery cells and the second battery cells may not overlap completely, and may slightly be offset from each other. The same may apply to a positional relationship between the second battery cells and the third battery cells as well as to a positional relationship between the third battery cells and the fourth battery cells. On the other hand, when the first battery cells in the first row are moved vertically toward the third row, the first battery cells and the third battery cells may overlap completely, or may slightly be offset from each other.

[0033] In an embodiment of the art disclosed herein, the plurality of first battery cells and the plurality of second battery cells may be connected in series to each other in two-by-two pairs. That is, for example, they may be connected in series in an order of the first battery cell, the first battery cell, the second battery cell, the second battery cell, the first battery cell, the first battery cell, and so on.

[0034] In an embodiment of the art disclosed herein, the plurality of first battery cells may be alternately oriented in opposite directions in the first row, and the plurality of third battery cells may be alternately oriented in opposite directions in the third row. In addition or as an alternative thereto, the plurality of second battery cells may be alternately oriented in opposite directions in the second row, and the plurality of fourth battery cells may be alternately oriented in opposite directions in the fourth row.

[0035] In an embodiment of the art disclosed herein, the at least one first lead plate may include a lead plate connected to the first ends of adjacent two of the plurality of first battery cells and to the first ends of adjacent two of the plurality of third battery cells. In addition or as an alternative thereto, the at least one first lead plate may include a lead plate connected to the first ends of adjacent two of the plurality of second battery cells and to the first ends of adjacent two of the plurality of fourth battery cells.

[0036] In addition to the above, the at least one second lead plate may include a lead plate connected to one of the plurality of first battery cells, one of the plurality of second battery cells, one of the plurality of third battery cells, and one of the plurality of fourth battery cells.

[0037] In an embodiment of the art disclosed herein, the battery pack may comprise a battery holder securing the plurality of battery cells, the at least one first lead plate, and the at least one second lead plate to each other. In addition, the battery pack may further comprise a housing accommodating the battery holder. Specific configurations of the battery holder and the housing are not particularly limited.

[0038] Representative, non-limiting examples of the present disclosure will now be described in further detail with reference to the attached drawings. This detailed description is merely intended to teach a person of skill in the art further details for practicing aspects of the present teachings and is not intended to limit the scope of the present disclosure. Furthermore, each of the additional features and teachings disclosed below may be utilized separately or in conjunction with other features and teachings to provide improved battery packs, as well as methods for using and manufacturing the same.

[0039] Moreover, combinations of features and steps disclosed in the following detailed description may not be

necessary to practice the present disclosure in the broadest sense, and are instead taught merely to particularly describe representative examples of the present disclosure. Furthermore, various features of the above-described and below-described representative examples, as well as the various independent and dependent claims, may be combined in ways that are not specifically and explicitly enumerated in order to provide additional useful embodiments of the present teachings.

[0040] All features disclosed in the description and/or the claims are intended to be disclosed separately and independently from each other for the purpose of original written disclosure, as well as for the purpose of restricting the claimed subject matter, independent of the compositions of the features in the embodiments and/or the claims. In addition, all value ranges or indications of groups of entities are intended to disclose every possible intermediate value or intermediate entity for the purpose of original written disclosure, as well as for the purpose of restricting the claimed subject matter.

Embodiments

[0041] A battery pack **10** of a first embodiment will be described with reference to the drawings. The battery pack **10** of the present embodiment is a rechargeable electric power storage device, and is detachably attached to electrical equipment such as a power tool (not shown) as a power source configured to supply power to the electrical equipment. As shown in FIGS. **1** and **2**, the battery pack **10** includes a plurality of battery cells **12**, a battery holder **14** that retains the plurality of battery cells **12**, and a circuit board **16** secured to the battery holder **14** and electrically connected to the plurality of battery cells **12**. Further, the battery pack **10** includes a housing **18** that accommodates the plurality of battery cells **12**, the battery holder **14**, and the circuit board **16**.

[0042] The plurality of battery cells **12** is retained parallel to each other by the battery holder **14**. Each of the battery cells **12** is a rechargeable battery cell. Although this is merely an example, each of the battery cells **12** in this embodiment is a lithium ion battery cell, and has a nominal voltage of substantially 4 volts. Further, a total number of the plurality of battery cells **12** is thirty-two, and sixteen pairs of battery cells **12** are connected in series with two battery cells **12** connected in parallel with each other constituting each pair. Due to this, the battery pack **10** has a nominal voltage of substantially 64 volts.

[0043] The battery holder **14** is constituted of an insulative material (such as a resin material). Although details will be given later, the battery holder **14** has a plurality of first lead plates **20** and a plurality of second lead plates **22** incorporated therein. The plurality of first lead plates **20** is arranged on one sidewall of the battery holder **14**, and the plurality of second lead plates **22** is arranged on another sidewall of the battery holder **14**. The plurality of battery cells **12** is electrically connected to each other through the plurality of first lead plates **20** and the plurality of second lead plates **22**. Further, each of the first lead plates **20** and each of the second lead plates **22** are electrically connected to the circuit board **16**.

[0044] The circuit board **16** is electrically connected to the plurality of battery cells **12** through the plurality of first lead plates **20** and the plurality of second lead plates **22**. The circuit board **16** is configured capable of detecting a voltage of each first lead plate **20** and a voltage of each second lead plate **22**, by which voltages of the respective battery cells **12** can be identified. In addition, the circuit board **16** includes a plurality of external connection terminals **24** for connecting to the electrical equipment. The plurality of external connection terminals **24** includes a pair of power terminals and several communication terminals. The pair of power terminals is electrically connected to the plurality of battery cells **12** and is configured to output discharged power from the plurality of battery cells **12** to the electrical equipment. Further, the pair of power terminals is configured to electrically connect to a charger (not shown), and is configured to receive charging power from the charger to the plurality of battery cells **12**. The communication terminals are connected to a processor (not shown) provided in the circuit board **16**.

[0045] The housing **18** has a substantially rectangular solid outer shape, and is constituted of a resin material. An engagement structure **18***a* for engaging with the electrical equipment and a plurality of openings **18***b* (such as slits) configured to accept connection terminals of the electrical equipment are provided on an upper surface of the housing **18**. The plurality of external connection terminals **24** on the circuit board **16** is respectively arranged inside the plurality of openings **18***b*. A configuration of the housing **18** described herein is an example, and a specific configuration of the housing **18** can suitably be modified.

[0046] Next, a structure of the battery holder **14** will be described with reference to FIG. **3**. The battery holder **14** includes a first holder body **26** and a second holder body **28**. The first holder body **26** and the second holder body **28** are secured to each other with the plurality of battery cells **12** interposed in between them, and retain the plurality of battery cells **12** parallel to each other. The battery holder **14** is further provided with a first holder cover **30** and a second holder cover **32**. The first holder cover **30** is attached to the first holder body **26** with the plurality of first lead plates **20** interposed in between them, and secure the plurality of first lead plates **20** relative to the first holder body **26** (that is, relative to the plurality of battery cells **12**). The second holder cover **32** is attached to the second holder body **28** with the plurality of second lead plates **22** interposed in between them, and secure the plurality of second lead plates **22** relative to the second holder body **28** (that is, relative to the plurality of battery cells **12**).

[0047] A first outer waterproof sheet **34** is provided between the first holder cover **30** and the plurality of first lead plates **20** and a first inner waterproof sheet **36** is provided between the plurality of first lead plates **20** and the first holder body **26**. The first outer waterproof sheet **34** and the first inner waterproof sheet **36** are constituted of silicone rubber, and are configured to suppress moisture and small foreign particles from entering. The plurality of first lead plates **20** is integrally retained between a pair of films **21** by laminating. Similarly, a second outer waterproof sheet **38** is provided between the second holder cover **32** and the plurality of second lead plates **22** and a second inner waterproof sheet **40** is provided between the plurality of second lead plates **22** and the second holder body **28**. The second outer waterproof sheet **38** and the second inner waterproof sheet **40** are also constituted of silicone rubber, and are configured to suppress moisture and small foreign particles from entering. The plurality of second lead plates **22** is also integrally retained between a pair of films **23** by

laminating. Each of the waterproof sheets **34**, **36**, **38**, **40** is not limited to silicone rubber, and may be constituted of other flexible material having waterproof capability such as elastomer and other polymer materials.

[0048] Next, the plurality of first lead plates **20** and the plurality of second lead plates **22** will be described in detail. In FIGS. **4** to **6**, depiction of the battery holder **14** is omitted. As shown in FIGS. **4** to **6**, the plurality of first lead plates **20** is arranged along a first plane P**1** and the plurality of second lead plates **22** is arranged along a second plane P**2**. Further, each of the plurality of battery cells **12** includes a first end **12***a* facing the first plane P**1** and a second end **12***b* facing the second plane P**2** parallel to the first plane P**1**. Orientations of the plurality of battery cells **12** are not identical. That is, some battery cells **12** have positive electrodes at their first ends **12***a* and negative electrodes at their second ends **12***b*, and other battery cells **12** have negative electrodes at their first ends **12***a* and positive electrodes at their second ends **12***b*.

[0049] Each of the first lead plates **20** includes a first main portion **20***a* positioned along the first plane P**1** and a first terminal portion **20***b* connected to the circuit board **16**. The first main portion **20***a* is connected to the first end **12***a* of at least one of the plurality of battery cells **12** (that is, the positive electrode or the negative electrode). Although there is no particular limitation, in the present embodiment, the first main portion **20***a* is connected to the first end **12***a* of at least one of the plurality of battery cells **12** by spot welding (resistance welding). On the other hand, the first terminal portion **20***b* is connected to the circuit board **16** by soldering.

[0050] Similarly, each of the second lead plates **22** includes a second main portion **22***a* positioned along the second plane P**2** and a second terminal portion **22***b* connected to the circuit board **16**. The second main portion **22***a* is connected to the second end **12***b* of at least one of the plurality of battery cells **12** (that is, the positive electrode or the negative electrode). Although there is no particular limitation, in the present embodiment, the second main portion **22***a* is connected to the second end **12***b* of at least one of the plurality of battery cells **12** by spot welding (resistance welding). On the other hand, the second terminal portion **22***b* is connected to the circuit board **16** by soldering.

[0051] As shown in FIGS. **7** and **8**, the plurality of battery cells **12** includes a plurality of first battery cells **12**A arranged in a first row A, a plurality of second battery cells **12**B arranged in a second row B adjacent to the first row A, a plurality of third battery cells **12**C arranged in a third row C adjacent to the second row B, and a plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D arranged in a fourth row D adjacent to the third row C. Although there is no particular limitation, numbers of the first battery cells **12**A, the second battery cells **12**B, the third battery cells **12**C, and the fourth battery cells **12**D are identical to each other, and the numbers thereof are eight each. Further, the first row A to the fourth row D are parallel to each other, and center axes of the battery cells **12** are positioned on a same plane in each of the first row A to the fourth row D.

[0052] The plurality of first battery cells **12**A and the plurality of second battery cells **12**B are connected in series to each other in one-by-one pairs. Especially, two first battery cells **12**A adjacent to each other are connected in series through one second battery cell **12**B located closest thereto. Further, each of the plurality of first battery cells **12**A has corresponding one of the plurality of third battery cells **12**C connected thereto in parallel. Further, each of the plurality of second battery cells **12**B has corresponding one of the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D connected thereto in parallel. As such, the plurality of third battery cells **12**C and the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D are also alternately connected in series. Further, two third battery cells **12**C adjacent to each other are connected in series through one fourth battery cell **12**D located closest thereto.

[0053] The aforementioned configuration can prohibit any pairs of two battery cells **12** connected in parallel with each other from becoming adjacent to each other. For example, each of the first battery cells **12**A is connected in parallel with corresponding one of the third battery cells **12**C instead of the second battery cell **12**B that is adjacent thereto. Similarly, each of the second battery cells **12**B is connected in parallel with corresponding one of the fourth battery cells **12**D instead of the first battery cell **12**A or the third battery cell **12**C adjacent thereto. Due to this, when a short circuit occurs in one of the battery cells **12**, a corresponding battery cell **12** connected in parallel with this battery cell **12** is suppressed from being collaterally damaged.

[0054] In the battery pack **10** of the present embodiment, the plurality of first battery cells **12**A and the plurality of third battery cells **12**C have the positive electrodes at their first ends **12***a* and the negative electrodes at their second ends **12***b*. That is, the plurality of first battery cells **12**A and the plurality of third battery cells **12**C are arranged in a same orientation as each other. In addition, the plurality of second battery cells **12**B and the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D have the negative electrodes at their first ends **12***a* and the positive electrodes at their second ends **12***b*. That is, the plurality of second battery cells **12**B and the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D are oriented in a same direction as each other, and oriented in a different direction from that of the plurality of first battery cells **12**A and the plurality of third battery cells **12**C.

[0055] In the battery pack **10** of the present embodiment, a first multi-row lead plate is employed as each of the first lead plates **20** except for the first lead plates **20** (**20**X, **20**Y) located at both ends (see FIG. **5**). Each of the first multi-row lead plates **20** extends over the first row A to the fourth row D, and is connected to the positive electrode of one of the plurality of first battery cells **12**A, the negative electrode of one of the plurality of second battery cells **12**B, the positive electrode of one of the plurality of third battery cells **12**C, and the negative electrode of one of the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D.

[0056] The plurality of first multi-row lead plates **20** is arranged in a direction parallel to the first row A. This avoids two or more first multi-row lead plates **20** from becoming closer to or crossing over each other. Although there is no particular limitation, the plurality of first multi-row lead plates **20** may have a same shape as each other and be arranged in a same posture. Such a configuration simplifies the structure of the battery pack **10**, and can facilitate design and manufacture thereof. Specific shapes of the first multi-row lead plates **20** may suitably be designed according to an arrangement of the plurality of battery cells **12**, for example.

[0057] In the battery pack **10** of the present embodiment, a second multi-row lead plate is employed as each of the second lead plates **22** (see FIG. **6**). Each of the second multi-row lead plates **22** extends over the first row A to the fourth row D, and is connected to the negative electrode of one of the plurality of first battery cells **12**A, the positive

electrode of one of the plurality of second battery cells **12**B, the negative electrode of one of the plurality of third battery cells **12**C, and the positive electrode of one of the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D.

[0058] The plurality of second multi-row lead plates **22** is arranged in the direction parallel to the first row A. This avoids two or more second multi-row lead plates **22** from becoming closer to or crossing over each other. Although there is no particular limitation, the plurality of second multi-row lead plates **22** may have a same shape as each other and be arranged in a same posture. Such a configuration simplifies the structure of the battery pack **10**, and can facilitate design and manufacture thereof. Specific shapes of the second multi-row lead plates **22** may suitably be designed according to the arrangement of the plurality of battery cells **12**, for example. Although this is merely an example, the second multi-row lead plates **22** in the present embodiment have a shape that differs from those of the first multi-row lead plates **20**.

[0059] In the battery pack **10** of the present embodiment, the plurality of battery cells **12** is arranged in a staggered arrangement. For example, when the first battery cells **12**A in the first row A are moved vertically toward the second row B, the first battery cells **12**A and the second battery cells **12**B do not overlap completely. The same applies to a positional relationship between the second battery cells **12**B and the third battery cells **12**C as well as to a positional relationship between the third battery cells **12**C and the fourth battery cells **12**D. In addition, although there is no particular limitation made hereto, when the first battery cells **12**A in the first row A are moved vertically to the third row C, the first battery cells **12**A and the third battery cells **12**C do not overlap completely. Further, when the second battery cells **12**B in the second row B are moved vertically to the fourth row D, the second battery cells **12**B and the fourth battery cells **12**D do not overlap completely. Further, the arrangement of the plurality of battery cells **12** is not particularly limited. The plurality of battery cells **12** may be arranged in contact with each other, or may be arranged with clearances in between them.

[0060] A battery pack **110** of a second embodiment will be described with reference to FIGS. **9** and **10**. Here, of a configuration of the battery pack **110** of the present embodiment, differences from the battery pack **10** of the first embodiment will primarily be explained. Unless otherwise stated in the description below, the respective configurations provided in the battery pack **10** of the first embodiment can selectively be employed in the battery pack **110** of the present embodiment.

[0061] As shown in FIGS. **9** and **10**, the battery pack **110** of the present embodiment includes four battery cells **12**. The four battery cells **12** are supported parallel to each other, and each has a first end **12***a* facing a first plane and a second end **12***b* facing a second plane parallel to the first plane. Further, the battery pack **110** includes two first lead plates **20** arranged along the first plane and one second lead plate **22** arranged along the second plane. These plural lead plates **20**, **22** electrically connect the four battery cells **12**.

[0062] The four battery cells **12** include a single first battery cell **12**A arranged in a first row A, a single second battery cell **12**B arranged in a second row B adjacent to the first row A, a single third battery cell **12**C arranged in a third row C adjacent to the second row B, and a single fourth battery cell **12**D arranged in a fourth row D adjacent to the third row C. The first battery cell **12**A and the second battery cell **12**B are connected in series. Further, the first battery cell **12**A has the third battery cell **12**C connected thereto in parallel, and the second battery cell **12**B has the fourth battery cell **12**D connected thereto in parallel. The second lead plate **22** has a structure of a second multi-row lead plate, and is connected to the negative electrode of the first battery cell **12**A, the positive electrode of the second battery cell **12**B, the negative electrode of the third battery cell **12**C, and the positive electrode of the fourth battery cell **12**D.

[0063] In the battery pack **110** of the second embodiment as well, any pairs of two battery cells **12** connected in parallel with each other are avoided from becoming adjacent to each other. For example, the first battery cell **12**A is connected in parallel with the third battery cell **12**C instead of the second battery cell **12**B that is adjacent thereto. Similarly, the second battery cell **12**B is connected in parallel with the fourth battery cell **12**D instead of the first battery cell **12**A or the third battery cell **12**C adjacent thereto. Due to this, when a short circuit occurs in one of the battery cells **12**, corresponding battery cell **12** connected in parallel with this battery cell **12** is suppressed from being collaterally damaged.

[0064] A battery pack **210** of a third embodiment will be described with reference to FIGS. **11** and **12**. Here, of a configuration of the battery pack **210** of the present embodiment, differences from the battery pack **10** of the first embodiment will primarily be explained. Unless otherwise stated in the description below, the respective configurations provided in the battery pack **10** of the first embodiment can selectively be employed in the battery pack **210** of the present embodiment.

[0065] As shown in FIGS. **11** and **12**, the battery pack **210** of the present embodiment includes a plurality of battery cells **12**. The plurality of battery cells **12** is supported parallel to each other, and each has a first end **12***a* facing a first plane and a second end **12***b* facing a second plane parallel to the first plane. Further, the battery pack **210** includes a plurality of first lead plates **20** arranged along the first plane and a plurality of second lead plates **22** arranged along the second plane. These plural lead plates **20**, **22** electrically connect the plurality of battery cells **12**.

[0066] The plurality of battery cells **12** includes a plurality of first battery cells **12**A arranged in a first row A, a plurality of second battery cells **12**B arranged in a second row B adjacent to the first row A, a plurality of third battery cells **12**C arranged in a third row C adjacent to the second row B, and a plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D arranged in a fourth row D adjacent to the third row C. The plurality of first battery cells **12**A and the plurality of second battery cells **12**B are connected in series to each other in one-by-one pairs. Further, each of the first battery cells **12**A has corresponding one of the plurality of third battery cells **12**C connected in parallel, and each of the second battery cells **12**B has corresponding one of the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D connected in parallel.

[0067] In the battery pack **210** of the present embodiment as well, each of the first lead plates **20** except for the first lead plates **20** (**20**X, **20**Y) located at both ends has a first multi-row lead plate structure. That is, each of the first lead plates **20** extends over the first row A to the fourth row D, and is connected to a positive electrode of one of the plurality of first battery cells **12**A, a negative electrode of one of the plurality of second battery cells **12**B, a positive

electrode of one of the plurality of third battery cells **12**C, and a negative electrode of one of the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D.

[0068] In addition, each of the second lead plates **22** has a second multi-row lead plate structure. That is, each of the second lead plates **22** extends over the first row A to the fourth row D, and is connected to a negative electrode of one of the plurality of first battery cells **12**A, a positive electrode of one of the plurality of second battery cells **12**B, a negative electrode of one of the plurality of third battery cells **12**C, and a positive electrode of one of the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D.

[0069] In the battery pack **210** of the third embodiment as well, any pairs of two battery cells **12** connected in parallel with each other are avoided from becoming adjacent to each other. For example, each first battery cell **12**A is connected in parallel with its corresponding third battery cell **12**C instead of the second battery cell **12**B that is adjacent thereto. Similarly, each second battery cell **12**B is connected in parallel with its corresponding fourth battery cell **12**D instead of the first battery cell **12**A or the third battery cell **12**C adjacent thereto. Due to this, when a short circuit occurs in one of the battery cells **12**, a corresponding battery cell **12** connected in parallel with this battery cell **12** is suppressed from being collaterally damaged.

[0070] A battery pack **310** of a fourth embodiment will be described with reference to FIGS. **13** and **14**. Here, of a configuration of the battery pack **310** of the present embodiment, differences from the battery pack **10** of the first embodiment will primarily be explained. Unless otherwise stated in the description below, the respective configurations provided in the battery pack **10** of the first embodiment can selectively be employed in the battery pack **310** of the present embodiment.

[0071] As shown in FIGS. **13** and **14**, the battery pack **310** of the present embodiment includes a plurality of battery cells **12**. The plurality of battery cells **12** is supported parallel to each other, and each has a first end **12***a* facing a first plane and a second end **12***b* facing a second plane parallel to the first plane. Further, the battery pack **310** includes a plurality of first lead plates **20** arranged along the first plane and a plurality of second lead plates **22** arranged along the second plane. These plural lead plates **20**, **22** electrically connect the plurality of battery cells **12**.

[0072] The plurality of battery cells **12** includes a plurality of first battery cells **12**A arranged in a first row A, a plurality of second battery cells **12**B arranged in a second row B adjacent to the first row A, a plurality of third battery cells **12**C arranged in a third row C adjacent to the second row B, and a plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D arranged in a fourth row D adjacent to the third row C. The plurality of first battery cells **12**A is arranged by being alternately oriented in opposite directions in the first row A. With the plurality of first battery cells **12**A, positive electrodes and negative electrodes appear alternately as their first ends **12***a* arranged in the first row A. Similarly, the plurality of second battery cells **12**B is arranged by being alternately oriented in opposite directions in the second row B, the plurality of third battery cells **12**C is arranged by being alternately oriented in opposite directions in the third row C, and the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D is arranged by being alternately oriented in opposite directions in the fourth row D.

[0073] The plurality of first battery cells **12**A and the plurality of second battery cells **12**B are connected in series to each other in two-by-two pairs except for those located at both ends. Further, each of the first battery cells **12**A has corresponding one of the plurality of third battery cells **12**C connected in parallel thereto, and each of the second battery cells **12**B has corresponding one of the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D connected in parallel thereto.

[0074] In the battery pack **310** of the present embodiment, one of the first lead plates **20** is connected to the first ends **12***a* of two first battery cells **12**A adjacent to each other and the first ends **12***a* of two third battery cells **12**C adjacent to each other. Further, another one of the first lead plates **20** is connected to the first ends **12***a* of two second battery cells **12**B adjacent to each other and the first ends **12***a* of two fourth battery cells **12**D adjacent to each other. That is, each of the first lead plates **20** does not have a first multi-row lead plate configuration as aforementioned.

[0075] On the other hand, each of the second lead plates **22** has a second multi-row lead plate structure, and extends over the first row A to the fourth row D. However, the second lead plate **22** located at a center is connected to one positive electrode among those of the plurality of first battery cells **12**A, one negative electrode among those of the plurality of second battery cells **12**B, one positive electrode among those of the plurality of third battery cells **12**C, and one negative electrode among those of the plurality of fourth battery cells **12**D. As for other second lead plates **22**, each of them is connected to a negative electrode of one of the first battery cells **12**A, a positive electrode of one of the second battery cells **12**B, a negative electrode of one of the third battery cells **12**C, and a positive electrode of one of the fourth battery cells **12**D, similarly to the other embodiments.

[0076] In the battery pack **310** of the fourth embodiment as well, any pairs of two battery cells **12** connected in parallel with each other are avoided from becoming adjacent to each other. For example, each first battery cell **12**A is connected in parallel with its corresponding third battery cell **12**C instead of the second battery cell **12**B that is adjacent thereto. Similarly, each second battery cell **12**B is connected in parallel with its corresponding fourth battery cell **12**D instead of the first battery cell **12**A or the third battery cell **12**C adjacent thereto. Due to this, when a short circuit occurs in one of the battery cells **12**, a corresponding battery cell **12** connected in parallel with this battery cell **12** is suppressed from being collaterally damaged.

What is claimed is:

1. A battery pack comprising:

a plurality of battery cells supported parallel to each other, each battery cell comprising a first end facing a first plane and a second end facing a second plane parallel to the first plane;

a plurality of lead plates electrically connecting the plurality of battery cells, the plurality of lead plates including at least one first lead plate arranged along the first plane and at least one second lead plate arranged along the second plane,

wherein

the plurality of battery cells includes at least one first battery cell arranged in a first row, at least one second battery cell arranged in a second row adjacent to the first row, at least one third battery cell arranged in a third row adjacent to the second row, and at least one fourth battery cell arranged in a fourth row adjacent to the third row,

the at least one first battery cell and the at least one second battery cell are connected in series,

each of the at least one first battery cell is connected in parallel with corresponding one of the at least one third battery cell, and

each of the at least one second battery cell is connected in parallel with corresponding one of the at least one fourth battery cell.

2. The battery pack according to claim **1**, wherein

the at least one first battery cell includes a plurality of first battery cells arranged in the first row, and

the at least one third battery cell includes a plurality of third battery cells arranged in the third row.

3. The battery pack according to claim **2**, wherein

the at least one second battery cell includes a plurality of second battery cells arranged in the second row, and

the at least one fourth battery cell includes a plurality of fourth battery cells arranged in the fourth row.

4. The battery pack according to claim **1**, wherein

the at least one first battery cell includes a plurality of first battery cells arranged in the first row,

the at least one second battery cell includes a plurality of second battery cells arranged in the second row,

the at least one third battery cell includes a plurality of third battery cells arranged in the third row, and

the at least one fourth battery cell includes a plurality of fourth battery cells arranged in the fourth row.

5. The battery pack according to claim **4**, wherein the plurality of first battery cells and the plurality of second battery cells are connected in series to each other in one-by-one pairs.

6. The battery pack according to claim **5**, wherein

each of the plurality of first battery cells and the plurality of third battery cells comprises a positive electrode at the first end and a negative electrode at the second end, and

each of the plurality of second battery cells and the plurality of fourth battery cells comprises a negative electrode at the first end and a positive electrode at the second end.

7. The battery pack according to claim **6**, wherein the at least one first lead plate includes a first multi-row lead plate connected to the positive electrode of one of the plurality of first battery cells, the negative electrode of one of the plurality of second battery cells, the positive electrode of one of the plurality of third battery cells, and the negative electrode of one of the plurality of fourth battery cells.

8. The battery pack according to claim **7**, wherein

the at least one first lead plate includes a plurality of the first multi-row lead plates, and

the plurality of first multi-row lead plates is arranged in a direction parallel to the first row.

9. The battery pack according to claim **8**, wherein the plurality of first multi-row lead plates has a same shape and is arranged in a same posture as each other.

10. The battery pack according to claim **7**, wherein the at least one second lead plate includes a second multi-row lead plate connected to the negative electrode of one of the plurality of first battery cells, the positive electrode of one of the plurality of second battery cells, the negative electrode of one of the plurality of third battery cells, and the positive electrode of one of the plurality of fourth battery cells.

11. The battery pack according to claim **10**, wherein

the at least one second lead plate includes a plurality of the second multi-row lead plates, and

the plurality of second multi-row lead plates is arranged in a direction parallel to the first row.

12. The battery pack according to claim **11**, wherein the plurality of second multi-row lead plates has a same shape and is arranged in a same posture as each other.

13. The battery pack according to claim **12**, wherein the shape of the second multi-row lead plate is different from the shape of the first multi-row lead plate.

14. The battery pack according to claim **4**, wherein at least some of the plurality of first battery cells and at least some of the plurality of second battery cells are connected in series to each other in two-by-two pairs.

15. The battery pack according to claim **14**, wherein

the plurality of first battery cells is alternately oriented in opposite directions in the first row, and

the plurality of third battery cells is alternately oriented in opposite directions in the third row.

16. The battery pack according to claim **15**, wherein

the plurality of second battery cells is alternately oriented in opposite directions in the second row, and

the plurality of fourth battery cells is alternately oriented in opposite directions in the fourth row.

17. The battery pack according to claim **14**, wherein the at least one first lead plate includes a lead plate connected to the first ends of adjacent two of the plurality of first battery cells and to the first ends of adjacent two of the plurality of third battery cells.

18. The battery pack according to claim **14**, wherein the at least one first lead plate includes a lead plate connected to the first ends of adjacent two of the plurality of second battery cells and to the first ends of adjacent two of the plurality of fourth battery cells.

19. The battery pack according to claim **14**, wherein the at least one second lead plate includes a lead plate connected to one of the plurality of first battery cells, one of the plurality of second battery cells, one of the plurality of third battery cells, and one of the plurality of fourth battery cells.

20. The battery pack according to claim **1**, wherein the plurality of battery cells is arranged in a staggered arrangement.

21. The battery pack according to claim **1**, further comprising a battery holder securing the plurality of battery cells, the at least one first lead plate, and the at least one second lead plate to each other.

22. The battery pack according to claim **21**, further comprising a housing accommodating the battery holder.

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