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Overberg

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(54) **SHROUD ASSEMBLY HAVING C-CLIP RETAINER**

(75) Inventor: **John H. Overberg**, Fairfield, OH (US)

(73) Assignee: **General Electric Company**, Schenectady, NY (US)

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **415/138**; 415/173.1; 415/173.3; 415/139; 415/1

(58) **Field of Search** 415/138, 1, 115, 415/116, 173.1, 173.3, 173.4, 173.5, 139

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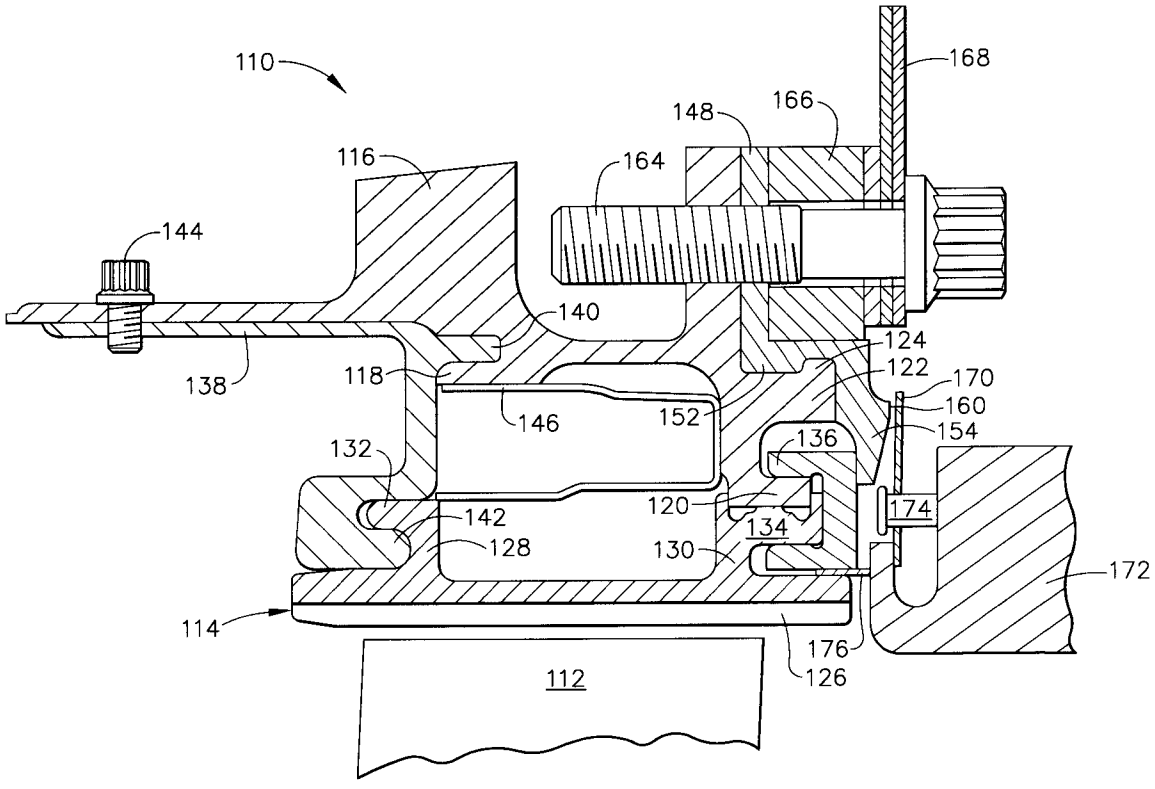
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Primary Examiner—Edward K. Look
Assistant Examiner—Richard Woo
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Rodney M. Young; Pierce Atwood

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Disengagement of the C-clip in turbine shroud assemblies is prevented by providing a C-clip retainer. The shroud assembly includes a shroud support having a hook and at least one shroud having a mounting flange. A C-clip overlaps the hook and the mounting flange to clamp the shroud to the shroud support, and the retainer is secured to the shroud support and located so as to engage the C-clip. The retainer engages the C-clip in such a manner so as to limit aft axial movement of the C-clip, thereby eliminating C-clip back-off.

34 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



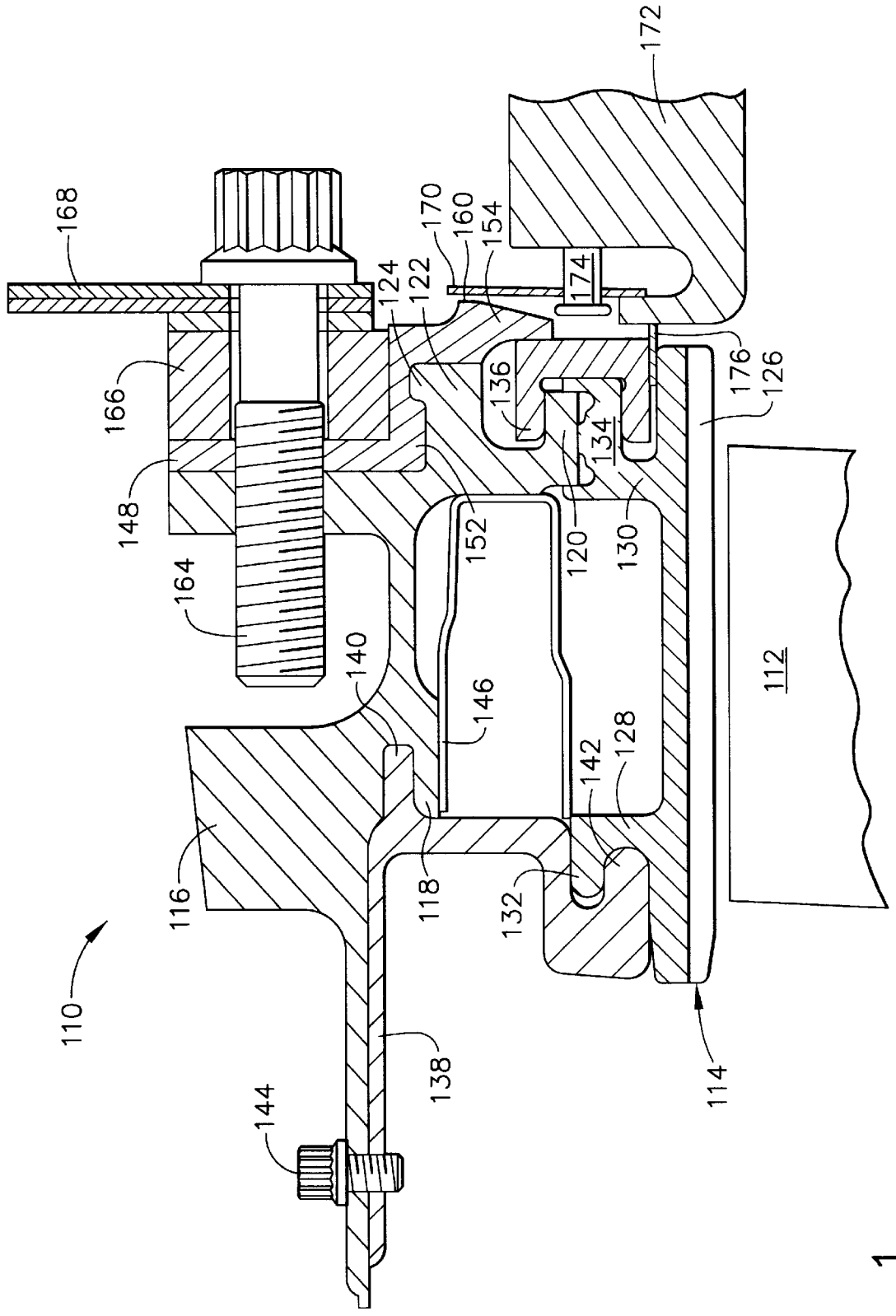

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FIG. 1

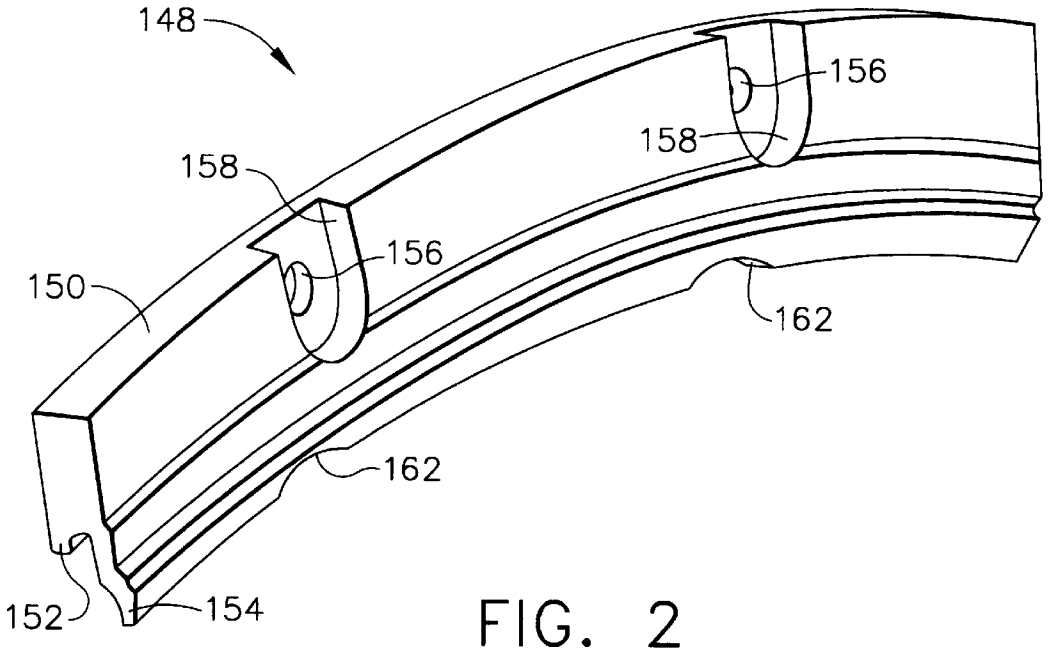

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FIG. 2

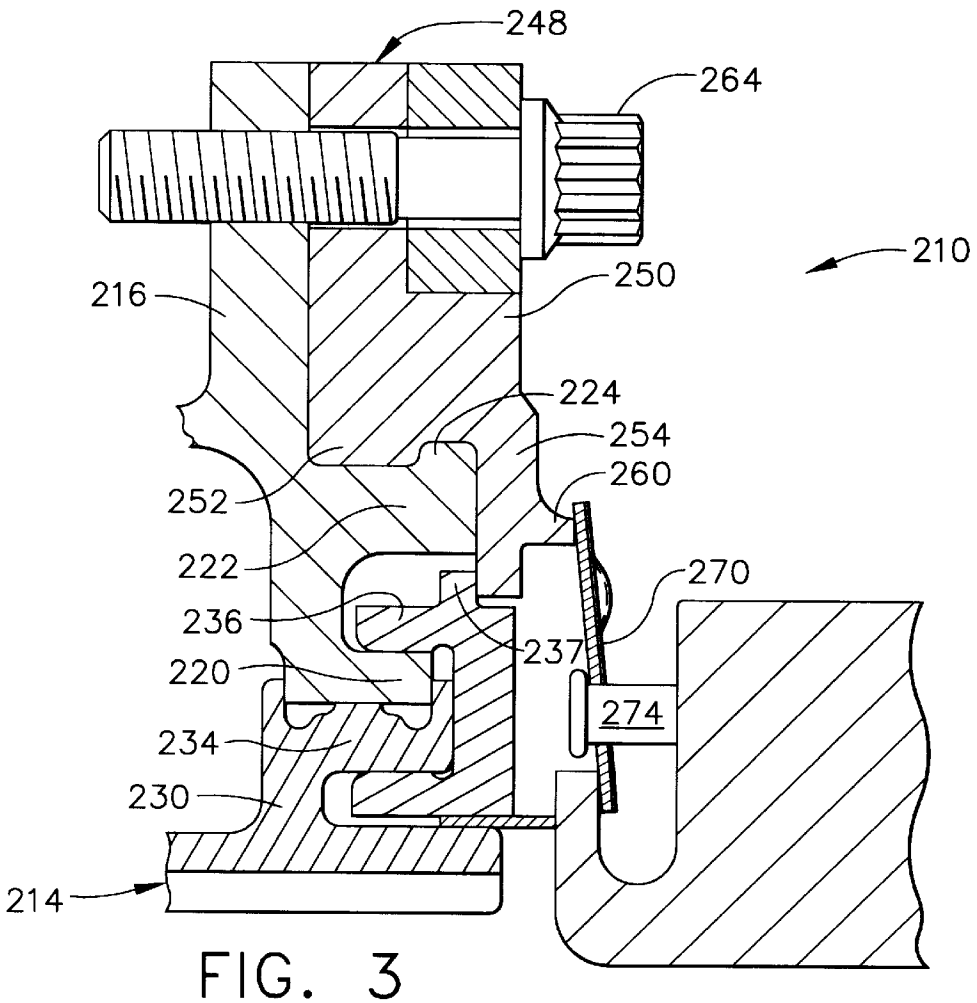

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FIG. 3

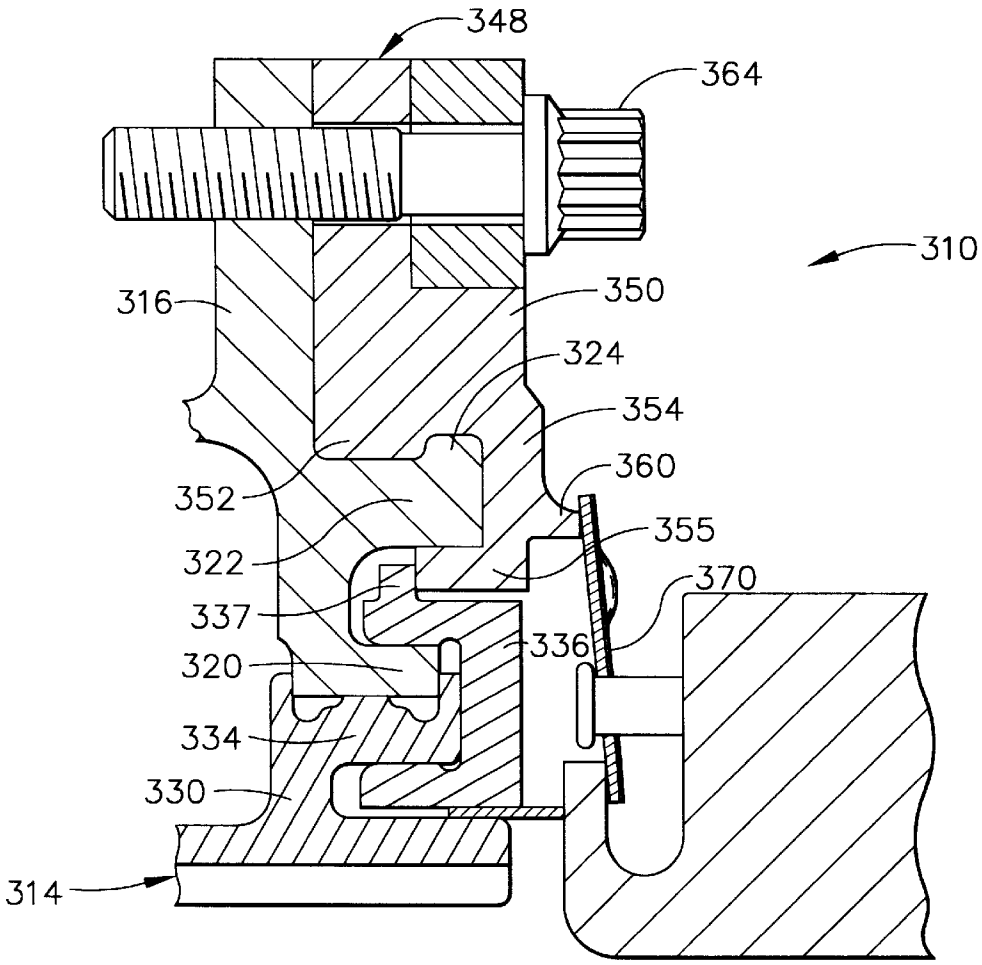

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FIG. 4

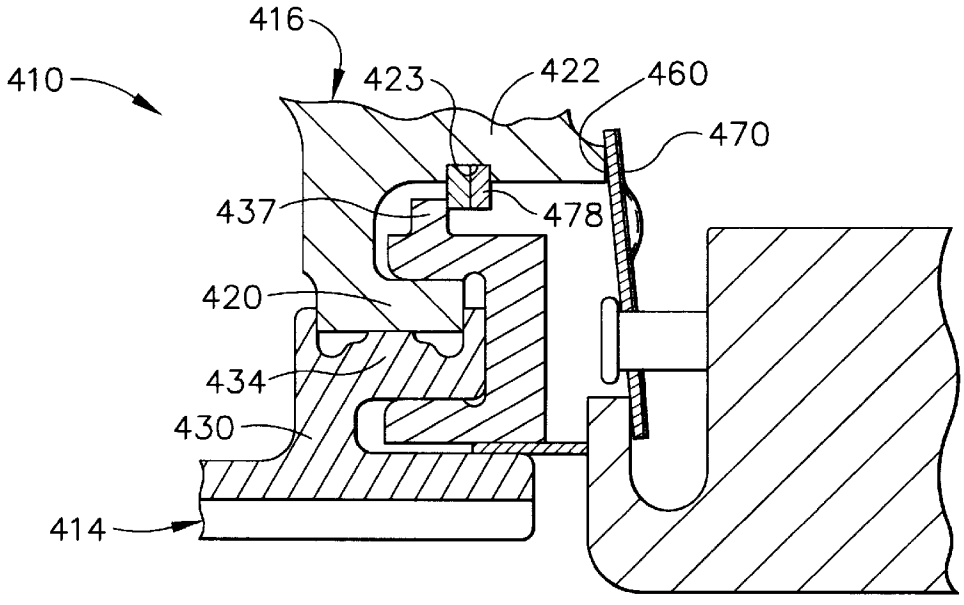

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FIG. 5

SHROUD ASSEMBLY HAVING C-CLIP RETAINER

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

The U.S. Government may have certain rights in this invention pursuant to contract numbers F33657-95-C0055 and F33657-97-C-0016 awarded by the Department of the Air Force.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to gas turbine engines and more particularly to shroud assemblies utilized in the high pressure turbine section of such engines.

A gas turbine engine includes a compressor that provides pressurized air to a combustor wherein the air is mixed with fuel and ignited for generating hot combustion gases. These gases flow downstream to one or more turbines that extract energy therefrom to power the compressor and provide useful work such as powering an aircraft in flight. A turbine section commonly includes a stationary turbine nozzle disposed at the outlet of the combustor for channeling combustion gases into a turbine rotor disposed downstream thereof. The turbine rotor includes a plurality of circumferentially spaced apart fan blades extending radially outwardly from a rotor disk that rotates about the centerline axis of the engine.

The turbine section further includes a shroud assembly located immediately downstream of the turbine nozzle. The shroud assembly closely surrounds the turbine rotor and thus defines the outer boundary for the hot combustion gases flowing through the turbine. A typical shroud assembly comprises a shroud support which is fastened to the engine outer case and which in turn supports a plurality of shrouds. The shrouds are held in place, in part, by arcuate retaining members commonly referred to as C-clips. Specifically, the C-lips hold the aft end of the shrouds in place against the shroud hangers via an interference fit.

The interference fit normally provides excellent retention of the shrouds. However, there can be a tendency for the C-clips to back off in some instances because of a thermal ratcheting phenomenon. That is, although the shrouds and C-clips are segmented to accommodate for thermal expansion, there is a possibility that the thermal loads within the shroud assembly can overcome the interference fit clamp loads. In some cases, there may be enough of a gap between the C-clip aft face and the adjacent nozzle outer band to allow for C-clip disengagement. Such disengagement could result in severe hardware damage.

Accordingly, there is a need for a shroud assembly design that eliminates C-clip back-off.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The above-mentioned needs are met by the present invention which provides a shroud assembly including a shroud support having a hook and at least one shroud having a mounting flange. A C-clip overlaps the hook and the mounting flange to clamp the shroud to the shroud support, and a retainer is secured to the shroud support and located so as to engage the Clip. The retainer engages the C-clip in such a manner so as to limit aft axial movement of the C-clip, thereby eliminating C-clip back-off.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and the appended claims with reference to the accompanying drawings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The subject matter which is regarded as the invention is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed in the concluding part of the specification. The invention, however, may be best understood by reference to the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing figures in which:

FIG. **1** is an axial sectional view of the shroud assembly of the present invention.

FIG. **2** is an isometric view of a retention plate from the shroud assembly of FIG. **1**.

FIG. **3** is a fragmentary sectional view showing a second embodiment of the shroud assembly of the present invention.

FIG. **4** is a fragmentary sectional view showing a third embodiment of the shroud assembly of the present invention.

FIG. **5** is a fragmentary sectional view showing a fourth embodiment of the shroud assembly of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to the drawings wherein identical reference numerals denote the same elements throughout the various views, FIG. **1** shows a shroud assembly **110** of the present invention in closely surrounding relation with turbine blades **112** carried by a rotor disk (not shown) in the high pressure turbine section of a gas turbine engine. The shroud assembly **110** includes a plurality of arcuate shrouds **114** (only one shown in FIG. **1**) arranged in an annular array so as to encircle the turbine blades **112**. The shrouds **114** are held in position by a shroud support **116** which, in turn, is supported by the engine outer case (not shown) in a conventional manner.

The shroud support **116** includes an axially extending forward hook **118** and an axially extending aft hook **120**. The shroud support **116** also includes an axially extending aft flange **122** disposed at a location radially outside of the aft hook **120**. A radially outwardly extending lip **124** is formed on the distal end of the aft flange **122**. Each shroud **114** includes a base **126** having radially outwardly extending forward and aft rails **128** and **130**, respectively. A forward mounting flange **132** extends forwardly from the forward rail **128** of each shroud **114**, and an aft mounting flange **134** extends rearwardly from the aft rail **130** of each shroud **114**. The aft mounting flanges **134** of each shroud **114** are juxtaposed with the aft hook **120** of the shroud support **116** and are held in place by a plurality of retaining members **136** commonly referred to as C-clips.

The C-clips **136** are arcuate members having a C-shaped cross section and snugly overlap the aft mounting flanges **134** and the aft hook **120** so as to clamp the aft ends of the shrouds **114** in place against the shroud support **116**. Although they could be formed as a single continuous ring, the C-clips **136** are preferably segmented to accommodate thermal expansion. Typically, one C-clip **136** clamps an entire shroud plus one-half of each adjacent shroud. In which case, there are twice as many shrouds **114** as there are C-clips **136**.

The forward end of each shroud **114** is supported from the shroud support **116** via conventional shroud hangers **138**. Each shroud hanger **138** includes a first hook **140** that engages the forward hook **118** of the shroud support **116** and a second hook **142** that engages the forward mounting flange **132** of each shroud **114**.

The shroud hangers **138** are also secured to the shroud support **116** by fasteners **144**. A conventional cooling air distributor **146** is disposed between the shroud **114** and the shroud support **116** for distributing cooling air to the shrouds **114** and adjacent structure.

The shroud assembly **110** further includes a plurality of retainer plates **148** (only one shown in FIG. **1**) arranged in an annular array and which function to limit aft axial movement of the C-clips **136**, thereby eliminating the potential of C-clip disengagement As with other components of the shroud assembly **110**, the retainer plates **148** could be formed as a single continuous ring. However, segmented plates are preferred to accommodate thermal expansion.

As best seen in FIG. **2**, the retainer plate **148** comprises an arcuate body **150** having an interlock lip **152** extending radially inwardly from the forward inner corner thereof and a retaining flange **154** extending radially inwardly from the aft inner corner thereof. A pair of bolt holes **156**, with surrounding recesses **158**, is formed in the aft face of the arcuate body **150**. The retaining flange **154** is provided with an aft lip wear surface **160** on its aft face and one or more clearance slots **162** in its distal edge, both of which are described in more detail below.

Referring again to FIG. **1**, the retainer plate **148** is secured to the aft end of the shroud support **116** so that the retaining flange **154** overhangs the back of the C-clip **136** and the interlock lip **152** engages the radial lip **124** formed on the aft flange **122** of the shroud support **116**. The retainer plate **148** is positioned such that the retaining flange **154** engages the aft side of the C-clip **136**. Preferably, the retainer plate **148** is secured to the shroud support **116** with bolts **164** that extend through bushings **166** disposed in the recesses **158** and the bolt holes **156**. The bolts **164** also attach a conventional flow divider **168** to the shroud support **116**.

By abutting the back of the C-clip **136**, the retaining flange **154** prevents aft axial movement of the C-clip **136**. The interlock lip **152** functions to react axial C-clip back-off load, thereby minimizing retainer plate bolt bending stress. The use of the interlock lip **152** also allows a smaller number of bolts **164** to be used. The retainer plates **148** can be sized such that each one engages multiple C-clips. Thus, the total number of retainer plates **148** will be less than the total number of C-clips **136**.

The aft lip wear surface **160** provides a contact surface for a leaf seal **170** which is disposed between the shroud assembly **110** and the nozzle outer band **172** of the adjacent stator assembly. The leaf seal **170** is attached to the nozzle outer band **172** by a plurality of circumferentially spaced pins **174** and prevents cooling air from passing between the shroud assembly **110** and the nozzle outer band **172**. The clearance slots **162** are circumferentially aligned with the leaf seal pins **174**. Thus, in the event the pins **174** travel radially outwardly because of thermal expansion of the nozzle outer band **172**, they will be received within the slots **162**, thereby avoiding any undesired interference between the pins **174** and the retaining flange **154**. The shroud assembly further includes a discourager seal **176** disposed between the radially inner surface of the C-clip **136** and the shrouds **114** for preventing the ingestion of hot gases into the cavity between the C-clip **136** and the nozzle outer band **172**.

In addition to eliminating the potential of C-clip disengagement, the shroud assembly **110** of the present invention provides further advantages in that it requires no modification to the shrouds **114**, C-clips **136** or shroud hangers **138**, and only limited modification of the shroud support **116**. Furthermore, the present invention permits simplified lip weld repair because just the retainer plate **148**, and not the entire shroud assembly **110**, needs to be removed for repair.

Turning to FIG. **3**, a shroud assembly **210** in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention is shown. The shroud assembly **210** is similar to the first embodiment in that it includes a plurality of arcuate shrouds **214** (only one shown in FIG. **3**) supported by a shroud support **216**. The shroud support **216** has an axially extending aft hook **220** formed on its aft end, and each shroud **214** includes an aft rail **230** from which an aft mounting flange **234** extends rearwardly. The aft mounting flanges **234** of each shroud **214** are juxtaposed with the aft hook **220** and are held in place by a plurality of C-clips **236** which overlap the aft mounting flanges **234** and the aft hook **220** so as to clamp them together.

The shroud assembly **210** further includes a plurality of retainer plates **248** (only one shown in FIG. **3**) attached to the aft end of the shroud support **216** by bolts **264**. Like the retainer plate **148** of the first embodiment, the retainer plate **248** of the second embodiment comprises an arcuate body **250** having an interlock lip **252** extending radially inwardly from the forward inner corner thereof and a retaining flange **254** extending radially inwardly from the aft inner corner thereof. As before, the interlock lip **252** engages a radial lip **224** formed on the distal end of an aft flange **222** extending from the shroud support **216**.

The retainer plate **248** differs from that of the first embodiment in that the retaining flange **254** is configured differently. Instead of overhanging the back of the C-clip **236**, the retaining flange **254** terminates at a point radially outside of the C-clip **236**. An aft lip wear surface **260** is formed on the aft face of the retaining flange **254** to present a contact surface for a leaf seal **270**. A retaining lip **237** is formed on the radially outer surface of the C-clip **236**, near its aft side. The retainer plate **248** is positioned on the shroud support **216** so that the retaining flange **254** engages the retaining lip **237**. By abutting the back of the retaining lip **237**, the retaining flange **254** prevents aft axial movement of the C-clip **236**.

By locating the contact point closer to the center of gravity of the retainer plate **248**, this embodiment provides for lower retainer plate bending moment, which can be a factor when high axial C-clip back-off loads are involved. Furthermore, because the retaining flange **254** is considerably shorter than that of the first embodiment, clearance between the retainer plate **248** and the leaf spring pins **274** is not an issue. Thus, the retaining flange **254** does not need clearance slots formed therein.

Referring to FIG. **4**, a shroud assembly **310** in accordance with a third embodiment of the present invention is shown. The shroud assembly **310** is quite similar to that of the second embodiment It includes a plurality of arcuate shrouds **314** (only one shown in FIG. **4**) supported by a shroud support **316**. The shroud support **316** has an axially extending aft hook **320** formed on its aft end, and each shroud **314** includes an aft rail **330** from which an aft mounting flange **334** extends rearwardly. The aft mounting flanges **334** of each shroud **314** are juxtaposed with the aft hook **320** and are held in place by a plurality of C-clips **336** which overlap the aft mounting flanges **334** and the aft hook **320** so as to clamp them together.

The shroud assembly **310** further includes a plurality of retainer plates **348** (only one shown in FIG. **4**) attached to the aft end of the shroud support **316** by bolts **364**. Each

retainer plate **348** comprises an arcuate body **350** having an interlock lip **352** extending radially inwardly from the forward inner corner thereof and a retaining flange **354** extending radially inwardly from the aft inner corner thereof. As before, the interlock lip **352** engages a radial lip **324** formed on the distal end of an aft flange **322** extending from the shroud support **316**.

The retainer plates **348** and C-clips **336** of the third embodiment are slightly different from that of the second embodiment. The retaining flange **354** terminates at a point radially outside of the C-clip **336** and has a forwardly extending abutment lip **355** formed on its distal end. An aft lip wear surface **360** is formed on the aft face of the retaining flange **354** to present a contact surface for a leaf seal **370**. A retaining lip **337** is formed on the radially outer surface of the C-clip **336**, but unlike the retaining lip **237** of the second embodiment, the retaining lip **337** is located near the forward side of the C-clip **336**. The retainer plate **348** is positioned on the shroud support **316** so that the abutment lip **355** engages the retaining lip **337**. By abutting the back of the retaining lip **337**, the retaining flange **354** prevents aft axial movement of the C-clip **336**.

Like the second embodiment, this configuration provides for lower retainer plate bending moment Furthermore, the forward location of the retaining lip **337** greatly reduces the stress impact on the C-clip with respect to the second embodiment.

Turning to FIG. **5**, a shroud assembly **410** in accordance with a fourth embodiment of the present invention is shown. As in the previous embodiments, the shroud assembly **410** includes a plurality of arcuate shrouds **414** (only one shown in FIG. **5**) supported by a shroud support **416**. The shroud support **416** has an axially extending aft hook **420** formed on its aft end, and each shroud **414** includes an aft rail **430** from which an aft mounting flange **434** extends rearwardly. The shroud support **416** also includes an axially extending aft flange **422** disposed at a location radially outside of the aft hook **420**. The aft mounting flanges **434** of each shroud **414** are juxtaposed with the aft hook **420** and are held in place by a plurality of C-clips **436** which overlap the aft mounting flanges **434** and the aft hook **420** so as to clamp them together.

An aft lip wear surface **460** is formed on the back side of the aft flange **422** to present a contact surface for a leaf seal **470**. A retaining lip **437** is formed on the radially outer surface of the C-clip **436** and is preferably located near the forward side of the C-clip **436**. The shroud assembly **410** differs from the previously described embodiments in the type of retainer used. Specifically, the retainer plate is replaced with a split ring **478** disposed within an annular slot **423** formed in the radially inner surface of the aft flange **422**. The slot **423** is axially positioned so that the spilt ring **478** engages the back side of the retaining lip **437**. The split ring **478** is preferably a **720** degree ring that fits into the slot **423** with a tight tolerance. Thus, the spilt ring **478** is axially fixed with respect to the shroud support **416** and accordingly prevents aft axial movement of the C-clip **436** by virtue of its abutting relationship with the retaining lip **437**.

The foregoing has described a shroud assembly having a retainer that eliminates C-clip back-off. While specific embodiments of the present invention have been described, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications thereto can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A shroud assembly comprising:

a shroud support having a hook;

at least one shroud having a mounting flange;

a C-clip overlapping said hook and said mounting flange; and

a retainer secured to said shroud support and located so as to engage said C-lip, wherein said retainer prevents aft axial movement of said C-clip.

2. The shroud assembly of claim **1** wherein said retainer comprises a retainer plate having a radially inwardly extending retaining flange that engages said C-clip.

3. The shroud assembly of claim **2** wherein said retaining flange has an aft lip wear surface formed thereon.

4. The shroud assembly of claim **2** wherein said retainer plate has a radially inwardly extending interlock lip and said shroud support has a radially outwardly extending lip, said interlock lip engaging said radially outwardly extending lip.

5. The shroud assembly of claim **2** wherein said retaining flange engages an aft side of said C-clip.

6. The shroud assembly of claim **2** wherein said retaining flange has at least one clearance slot formed therein.

7. The shroud assembly of claim **2** wherein said C-clip has a retaining lip formed on a radially outer surface thereof, said retaining lip engaging said retaining flange.

8. The shroud assembly of claim **7** wherein said retaining lip is located near an aft side of said C-clip.

9. The shroud assembly of claim **7** wherein said retaining lip is located near a forward side of said C-clip, said retaining flange having a forwardly extending abutment lip formed thereon.

10. The shroud assembly of claim **1** wherein said shroud support has an annular slot formed therein and said retainer comprises a split ring disposed in said slot, said split ring engaging said C-clip.

11. The shroud assembly of claim **10** wherein said split ring is a 720 degree ring.

12. The shroud assembly of claim **10** wherein said C-clip has a retaining lip formed on a radially outer surface thereof, said retaining lip engaging said split ring.

13. The shroud assembly of claim **12** wherein said retaining lip is located near a forward side of said C-clip.

14. A shroud assembly comprising:

a shroud support having a hook;

at least one shroud having a mounting flange;

a C-clip overlapping said hook and said mounting flange; and

means for preventing aft axial movement of said C-clip.

15. The shroud assembly of claim **14** wherein said means for preventing aft axial movement of said C-clip comprises a retainer plate having a radially inwardly extending retaining flange that engages said C-clip.

16. The shroud assembly of claim **15** wherein said retaining flange has an aft lip wear surface formed thereon.

17. The shroud assembly of claim **15** wherein said retainer plate has a radially inwardly extending interlock lip and said shroud support has a radially outwardly extending lip, said interlock lip engaging said radially outwardly extending lip.

18. The shroud assembly of claim **15** wherein said retaining flange engages an aft side of said C-clip.

19. The shroud assembly of claim **15** wherein said retaining flange has at least one clearance slot formed therein.

20. The shroud assembly of claim **15** wherein said C-clip has a retaining lip formed on a radially outer surface thereof, said retaining lip engaging said retaining flange.

21. The shroud assembly of claim **20** wherein said retaining lip is located near an aft side of said C-clip.

22. The shroud assembly of claim **20** wherein said retaining lip is located near a forward side of said C-clip, said retaining flange having a forwardly extending abutment lip formed thereon.

23. The shroud assembly of claim **14** wherein said shroud support has an annular slot formed therein and said means for preventing aft axial movement of said C-clip comprises a split ring disposed in said slot, said split ring engaging said C-clip.

24. The shroud assembly of claim **23** wherein said split ring is a 720 degree ring.

25. The shroud assembly of claim **23** wherein said C-clip has a retaining lip formed on a radially outer surface thereof, said retaining lip engaging said split ring.

26. The shroud assembly of claim **25** wherein said retaining lip is located near a forward side of said C-clip.

27. A shroud assembly for a gas turbine engine having a turbine rotor carrying a plurality of turbine blades, said shroud assembly comprising:

an annular shroud support, said shroud support having an axially extending aft hook formed thereon;

a plurality of shrouds arranged in an annular array to encircle said turbine blades, each one of said shrouds including a base having an aft rail extending outwardly therefrom, said aft rail having a mounting flange formed thereon;

a plurality of C-clips overlapping said aft hook and said mounting flanges for clamping said shrouds to said shroud support; and

at least one retainer secured to said shroud support and engaging said C-clips so as to prevent aft axial movement of said C-clips.

28. The shroud assembly of claim **27** wherein said at least one retainer comprises a plurality of retainer plates, each retainer plate having a radially inwardly extending retaining flange that engages an aft side of at least one C-clip, and a radially inwardly extending interlock lip that engages a radially outwardly extending lip formed on said shroud support.

29. The shroud assembly of claim **27** wherein each one of said C-clips has a retaining lip formed on a radially outer surface thereof, near an aft side thereof, and wherein said at least one retainer comprises a plurality of retainer plates, each retainer plate having a radially inwardly extending retaining flange that engages at least one of said retaining lips, and a radially inwardly extending interlock lip that engages a radially outwardly extending lip formed on said shroud support.

30. The shroud assembly of claim **27** wherein each one of said C-clips has a retaining lip formed on a radially outer surface thereof, near a forward side thereof, and wherein said at least one retainer comprises a plurality of retainer plates, each retainer plate having a radially inwardly extending retaining flange, a forwardly extending abutment lip that engages at least one of said retaining lips formed on said retaining flange, and a radially inwardly extending interlock lip that engages a radially outwardly extending lip formed on said shroud support.

31. The shroud assembly of claim **27** wherein said shroud support has an annular slot formed therein, wherein each one of said C-clips has a retaining lip formed on a radially outer surface thereof, and wherein said at least one retainer comprises a split ring disposed in said slot, said split ring engaging said retaining lips.

32. In a shroud assembly comprising a shroud support having a hook, at least one shroud having a mounting flange and a C-clip,overlapping said hook and said mounting flange, a method of preventing aft axial movement of said C-clip, said method comprising:

placing a retainer in engagement with said C-clip, such that said retainer blocks aft axial movement of said C-clip; and

securing said retainer to said shroud support.

33. The method of claim **32** wherein the step of securing said retainer to said shroud support comprises bolting said retainer to said shroud support.

34. The method of claim **32** wherein the step of securing said retainer to said shroud support comprises disposing said retainer in a slot formed in said shroud support.

* * * * *