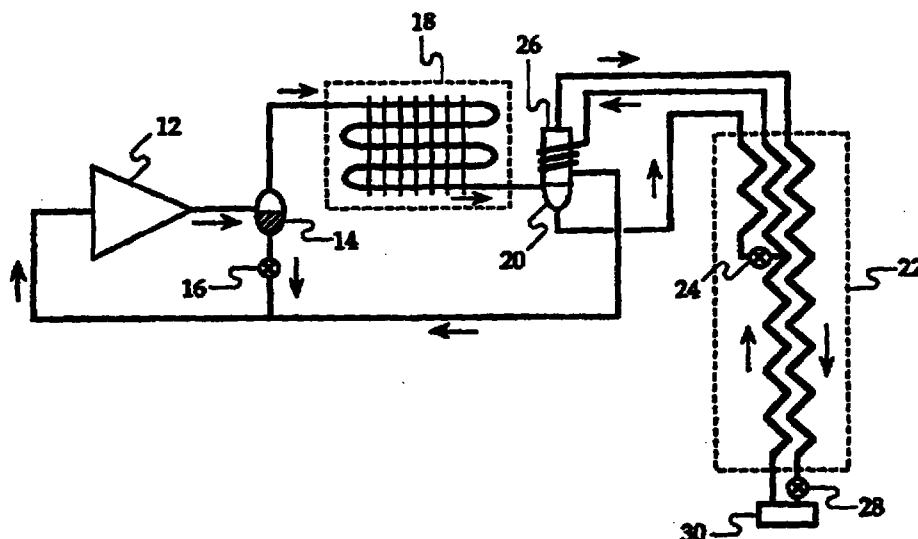


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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶: F17C 3/10, F25B 47/00, 43/04	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 96/30695 (43) International Publication Date: 3 October 1996 (03.10.96)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US96/04200 (22) International Filing Date: 27 March 1996 (27.03.96) (30) Priority Data: 08/412,529 29 March 1995 (29.03.95) US (71) Applicant: MMR TECHNOLOGIES, INC. [US/US]; 1400 N. Shoreline #A-5, Mountain View, CA 94043-1312 (US). (72) Inventor: LITTLE, William, A.; 15 Crescent Drive, Palo Alto, CA 94301 (US). (74) Agent: McFARLANE, Thomas, J.; 426 Lowell Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301 (US).		(81) Designated States: JP, KR, SG, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE). Published <i>With international search report.</i>

(54) Title: SELF-CLEANING LOW TEMPERATURE REFRIGERATION SYSTEM**(57) Abstract**

A method and device is disclosed for removing residual oil and other contaminants from the refrigerant stream flowing to low-temperature stages of a cryogenic refrigerator. A stream of vapor and liquid refrigerant coming from an air-cooled condenser is injected into a cyclone chamber (32) through the inlet tube (34). While the liquid drains down a conical section (36) and out through a liquid line (38), the vapor phase moves up into a packing of metal platelets (42) which is cooled by a returning stream of cold vapor passing through a tube (48) wrapped around the column. A portion of the vapor condenses on the platelets and is maintained in equilibrium with the vapor. Since high-molecular-weight contaminants are more soluble in the liquid phase, they are carried down the column with the drops of condensate and are swept out with the liquid fraction through the liquid line (38).