

DESCRIPTION

Title of Invention: Thrust Generating Apparatus

Related Application

[0001] This application claims priority to and the benefit of Japanese Patent Application No. 2009-150523, filed in Japan Patent Office on June 25, 2009, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

Technical Field

[0002] The present invention relates to a thrust generating apparatus configured to generate propulsive force of, for example, a vessel.

Background Art

[0003] In recent years, due to shortage of energy resources and the like, it has been required to improve the efficiency of a propulsion system configured to generate a propulsive force in a vessel. In the propulsion system of the vessel, a diesel engine has the most excellent heat efficiency among various prime movers, and the propulsion system in which the diesel engine is coupled directly or via a reducer to a propeller as a propulsor is now the mainstream. However, it has been pointed out that the diesel engine has an air pollution problem in terms of environmental performance. As an environmental countermeasure of the diesel engine, an electric propulsion system configured to rotate the propeller by an electric motor to generate the propulsive force has been attracting attention. For example, U.S. Patent No. 6692319 discloses a ring-shaped propulsion device for submarine vessels, the propulsion device being configured such that propeller blades projecting in a radially inward direction are provided on a rotor of a ring-shaped electric motor. According to this propulsion device,

by the rotation of the propeller blades driven by the electric motor, water stream is ejected to produce the propulsive force.

Summary of Invention

Technical Problem

[0004] In a case where the ring-shaped propulsion device for submarine vessels disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 6692319 is utilized as, for example, a side thruster of a normal vessel, a duct penetrating in a left-right direction is formed at a portion of a hull, the portion being located under a waterline, and the ring-shaped side thruster is fixed to the hull so as to constitute a part of the duct. In such installation condition, a disassembly operation of the side thruster is difficult. Therefore, for example, when conducting a periodic inspection or when a malfunction has occurred, a maintenance work burden is heavy. Also, regarding a main propulsion device that is not the side thruster, it is desired to improve the ease of maintenance.

[0005] An object of the present invention is to provide a thrust generating apparatus configured to have the improved ease of maintenance.

Solution to Problem

[0006] A thrust generating apparatus according to a first aspect of the present invention is a thrust generating apparatus provided in a liquid and configured to generate thrust by ejecting the liquid, the thrust generating apparatus including: an annular stator at which a plurality of coils are provided; a rotor including a plurality of magnets, an annular rotor core to which the magnets are attached and which is constituted by a magnetic body on which a corrosion resistant coating is formed, and an annular rotor main body externally fitted by the rotor core; a propeller blade provided on a radially inner side of the rotor

main body and formed integrally with the rotor main body; a first sliding bearing provided on one side of the rotor main body, provided to be opposed to one side surface and outer peripheral surface of the rotor main body, and configured to support a thrust load and a radial load; and a second sliding bearing provided on the other side of the rotor main body, provided to be opposed to the other side surface and outer peripheral surface of the rotor main body, and configured to support the thrust load and the radial load, wherein the rotor main body includes a first member including the side surface and outer peripheral surface which are opposed to the first sliding bearing, a second member including the side surface and outer peripheral surface which are opposed to the second sliding bearing, and a third member including a supporting surface contacting an inner peripheral surface of the rotor core, and the first to third members are fixed to one another so that each member is detachable.

[0007] For example, in the case of using the rotor main body that is one component formed by integrating a portion including the supporting surface externally fitted by the rotor core and a portion including the sliding surfaces opposed to the sliding bearings, when replacing the sliding surfaces of the rotor main body with new ones, it is necessary to separate the rotor main body which is replaced with a new one from the rotor core which is not replaced. In this case, the rotor core and the rotor main body needs to be carefully separated from each other such that the corrosion resistant coating of the rotor core is not peeled off. However, according to the above configuration, when replacing the side surfaces and outer peripheral surfaces that are the sliding surfaces of the rotor main body with new ones, the first and second members are detached from the third member, and the new first and second members are fixed to the third member. Therefore, it is unnecessary to separate the rotor core from the third member, and the maintenance work can be performed while maintaining a state where the rotor core

externally fits the third member. On this account, it is unnecessary for an operator to worry about peel-off of the corrosion resistant coating of the rotor core, and the ease of maintenance improves.

[0008] The thrust generating apparatus according to a second aspect of the present invention is a thrust generating apparatus provided in a liquid and configured to generate thrust by ejecting the liquid, the thrust generating apparatus including: an annular stator including a casing, a plurality of coils being provided on an inner periphery side of the casing; a rotor provided on an inner periphery side of the stator and including an annular rotor main body at which a plurality of magnets are provided; a propeller blade provided on a radially inner side of the rotor main body and formed integrally with the rotor main body; a sliding bearing provided to be opposed to a side surface and outer peripheral surface of the rotor main body and configured to support a thrust load and a radial load; and funnel-shaped fairings respectively provided on both sides of the rotor main body and each formed so as to enlarge a diameter thereof in a direction away from the rotor main body, wherein the casing and the fairings are integrated with one another so that each is detachable.

[0009] According to the above configuration, by detaching from the casing the funnel-shaped fairings provided to cover the rotor main body, the sliding bearing, and the like, easy access to the sliding bearing and the rotor main body is realized. Therefore, for example, the replacement of the sliding bearing and the rotor main body can be easily performed. Thus, the ease of maintenance improves.

[0010] The thrust generating apparatus according to a third aspect of the present invention is a thrust generating apparatus provided in a liquid and configured to generate thrust by ejecting the liquid, the thrust generating apparatus including: an annular stator at which a plurality of coils are provided; a rotor including a rotor main body at which a

plurality of magnets are provided; a propeller blade provided on a radially inner side of the rotor main body and formed integrally with the rotor main body; and a boss formed integrally with a radially inner tip end of the propeller member and provided on a rotation axis line of the rotor, wherein the rotor main body, the propeller blade, and the boss are fixed to one another so that each is detachable.

[0011] According to the above configuration, a radially outer portion of the propeller blade is fixed to the rotor main body, and a radially inner portion of the propeller blade is fixed to the boss. Therefore, the strength of the propeller blade improves. In addition, the propeller blade can be detached from the rotor main body and the boss. Therefore, for example, when the propeller blade breaks, the propeller blade can be easily replaced with a new one. Thus, the ease of maintenance improves.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0012] [Fig. 1] Fig. 1 is a longitudinal sectional view showing a thrust generating apparatus according to Embodiment 1 of the present invention.

[Fig. 2] Fig. 2 is a diagram showing the thrust generating apparatus of Fig. 1 when viewed from a left side in Fig. 1.

[Fig. 3] Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional view for explaining a state where the thrust generating apparatus of Fig. 1 is mounted on a hull.

[Fig. 4] Fig. 4 is a longitudinal sectional view showing the thrust generating apparatus according to Embodiment 2 of the present invention.

[Fig. 5] Fig. 5 is a diagram showing the thrust generating apparatus of Fig. 4 when viewed from a left side in Fig. 4.

[Fig. 6] Fig. 6 is an exploded perspective view showing a propeller member and boss of the thrust generating apparatus according to Embodiment 3 of the present

invention.

[Fig. 7] Fig. 7 is a perspective view showing that the propeller member and boss shown in Fig. 6 are assembled.

Description of Embodiments

[0013] Hereinafter, embodiments of the present invention will be explained in reference to the drawings.

[0014] Embodiment 1

As shown in Figs. 1 and 2, a thrust generating apparatus 10 of Embodiment 1 includes: an annular stator 11 fixed to a hull; an annular rotor 12 capable of rotating positively and negatively relative to the stator 11; a propeller member 13 formed integrally with the rotor 12 on a radially inner side of the rotor 12; and a boss 14 formed integrally with a radially inner tip end of the propeller member 13 and provided on a rotation axis line X of the rotor 12.

[0015] The stator 11 includes an annular outer casing 21 and an annular inner casing 22 provided on an inner periphery side of the outer casing 21. A substantially cylindrical space formed between the outer casing 21 and the inner casing 22 is a cooling space S1. The outer casing 21 is a cylindrical duct on which a cable through hole 21a is partially formed. The cable through hole 21a is closed by a lid 23. The inner casing 22 is formed by coupling first to fourth casings 24 to 27, support rings 28 and 29, and fairings 30 and 31 by bolts. The inner casing 22 (specifically, the second casing 25) is detachably fixed by bolts to a bracket 39 projecting from the outer casing 21 in a radially inward direction. The bracket 39 is provided partially in a circumferential direction and does not divide the cooling space S1.

[0016] The first casing 24 and the second casing 25 are coupled to each other by bolts

and forms a coil accommodating space S2. In the coil accommodating space S2, a stator core 32 constituted by a magnetic body as a magnetic flux path is provided, and armature coils 33 wind around the stator core 32. The armature coils 33 are connected via electric cables 34 and 35 to a power supply (not shown) provided in the hull. The electric cables 34 and 35 are coupled to each other in the cooling space S1 by water proof connectors 34a and 35a. The electric cable 35 on the hull side penetrates the lid 23 in a watertight manner. An annular cutout portion 25a is formed at a portion of the second casing 25, the portion corresponding to an inner peripheral surface of the stator core 32. The annular cutout portion 25a is closed by a thin can 36 in a watertight manner, the can 36 being made of a material which has an insulation property and a water resisting property and is small in eddy current loss.

[0017] The third casing 26 includes: a flange portion 26a fixed to the second casing 25 by bolts; and a cylindrical portion 26b extending in an outward direction along the rotation axis line X from an inner peripheral end of the flange portion 26a, and the fourth casing 27 includes a flange portion 27a fixed to the second casing 25 by bolts; and a cylindrical portion 27b extending in the outward direction along the rotation axis line X from an inner peripheral end of the flange portion 27a. A pair of support rings 28 and 29 are respectively fixed to outer end portions of the cylindrical portions 26b and 27b by bolts. The support ring 28 supports one end portion of a first water conveyance tube 37, and the support ring 29 supports one end portion a second water conveyance tube 38. A first water intake port 37a that is an opening at one end portion of the first water conveyance tube 37 is located on the same surface as an inner peripheral surface of the support ring 28 and is open toward a main channel R, and a second water intake port 38a that is an opening at one end portion of the second water conveyance tube 38 is located on the same surface as an inner peripheral surface of the support ring 29 and is open

toward the main channel R. The first water conveyance tube 37 and the second water conveyance tube 38 are provided symmetrically relative to the propeller member 13 in a direction along the rotation axis line X, and the first water intake port 37a and the second water intake port 38a are provided symmetrically relative to the propeller member 13 in the direction along the rotation axis line X (In Fig. 1, the second water conveyance tube 38 is partially not shown at a portion where the second water conveyance tube 38 overlaps the first water conveyance tube 37, and the first water conveyance tube 37 is partially not shown at a portion where the first water conveyance tube 37 overlaps the connectors 34a and 35a.).

The fairing 30 is formed so as to increase in diameter in a direction from an inner end portion 30a located close to the support ring 28 toward an outer end portion 30b located away from the support ring 28, and the fairing 31 is formed so as to increase in diameter in a direction from an inner end portion 31a located close to the support ring 29 toward an outer end portion 31b located away from the support ring 29. The inner end portions 30a and 31b of the fairings 30 and 31 are respectively fixed to the support rings 28 and 29 by bolts. To be specific, the fairings 30 and 31 and the outer casing 21 are indirectly, detachably integrated with one another. Gaps C1 and C2 are respectively formed between the outer end portion 30b of the fairing 30 and the outer casing 21 and between the outer end portion 31b of the fairing 31 and the outer casing 21. A hole 30c is formed on the fairing 30 so as to be located at a position overlapping an extended axis line of the bolt by which the fairing 30 is fixed to the support ring 28, and a hole 31c is formed on the fairing 31 so as to be located at a position overlapping an extended axis line of the bolt by which the fairing 31 is fixed to the support ring 29. The gaps C1 and C2 and the holes 30c and 31c serve as communication ports through which the cooling space S1 communicates with the main channel R.

[0018] First and second water lubricated bearings 40 and 41 (sliding bearings) are provided between the stator 11 and the rotor 12, and the rotor 12 is rotatably supported. Each of the first and second water lubricated bearings 40 and 41 is provided on an outer peripheral surface and one of both side surfaces of a below-described rotor main body 43 so as to be opposed to each other, the side surfaces being opposed to each other in the direction along the rotation axis line X. The first and second water lubricated bearings 40 and 41 support a thrust load and a radial load acting on the rotor main body 43. The first water lubricated bearing 40 includes a flange portion 40a and a cylindrical portion 40b extending in the outward direction along the rotation axis line X from an inner peripheral end of the flange portion 40a, and the second water lubricated bearing 41 includes a flange portion 41a and a cylindrical portion 41b extending in the outward direction along the rotation axis line X from an inner peripheral end of the flange portion 41a. Ceramic is sprayed on sliding surfaces of the first water lubricated bearing 40 on which the rotor main body 43 slides, and ceramic is sprayed on sliding surfaces of the second water lubricated bearing 41 on which the rotor main body 43 slides. Each of the first and second water lubricated bearings 40 and 41 may be made as a ceramic solid, or a separate ceramic member may be attached to each of a sliding portion of the first water lubricated bearing 40 on which the rotor main body 43 slides and a sliding portion of the second water lubricated bearing 41 on which the rotor main body 43 slides.

[0019] An annular buffer space S3 for temporarily storing water is formed between the first water lubricated bearing 40 and the third casing 26, and an annular buffer space S4 for temporarily storing water is formed between the second water lubricated bearing 41 and the fourth casing 27. The other end portion of the second water conveyance tube 38 is connected to the third casing 26 via a check valve 46, and the other end portion of the first water conveyance tube 37 is connected to the fourth casing 27 via a check valve 47.

The channel in the second water conveyance tube 38 communicates with the buffer space S3 via the check valve 46, and the channel in the first water conveyance tube 37 communicates with the buffer space S4 via the check valve 47. The check valve 46 allows only the flow from the second water intake port 38a toward the first water lubricated bearing 40, and the check valve 47 allows only the flow from the first water intake port 37a toward the second water lubricated bearing 41. Therefore, the water flowing through the first water intake port 37a into the first water conveyance tubes 37 is guided to the buffer space S4 through the check valve 47, and the water flowing through the second water intake port 38a into the second water conveyance tube 38 is guided to the buffer space S3 through the check valve 46. A plurality of ejection holes 40c are formed on the flange portion 40a of the first water lubricated bearing 40 so as to be spaced apart from one another in the circumferential direction at regular intervals. One end of each of the ejection holes 40c communicates with the buffer space S3, and the other end thereof is open toward the rotor main body 43. Similarly, a plurality of ejection holes 41c are formed on the flange portion 41a of the second water lubricated bearing 41 so as to be spaced apart from one another in the circumferential direction at regular intervals. One end of each of the ejection holes 41c communicates with the buffer space S4, and the other end thereof is open toward the rotor main body 43.

[0020] The rotor 12 includes: the rotor main body 43; an annular rotor core 44 which externally fits the rotor main body 43 and is made of a magnetic body to which a corrosion resistant coating is applied; and permanent magnets 45 which are attached to the rotor core 44 and on which the magnetic force of the armature coils 33 act. The rotor core 44 and the stator core 32 are provided at positions opposed to each other. By changing how to supply electricity to the armature coils 33, the rotational direction of the rotor 12 can be reversed. The rotor main body 43 includes: a first member 48 including

the side surface and outer peripheral surface opposed to the first water lubricated bearing 40; a second member 49 including the side surface and outer peripheral surface opposed to the second water lubricated bearing 41; and a third member 50 including a supporting surface contacting an inner peripheral surface of the rotor core 44.

[0021] The first to third members 48 to 50 are detachably fixed to one another by bolts. The first member 48 includes a flange portion 48a and a cylindrical portion 48b extending in the outward direction along the rotation axis line X from an inner peripheral end of the flange portion 48a, and the second member 49 includes a flange portion 49a and a cylindrical portion 49b extending in the outward direction along the rotation axis line X from an inner peripheral end of the flange portion 49a. An outer side surface of the flange portion 48a of the first member 48 in the direction along the rotation axis line X is a thrust sliding surface opposed to the flange portion 40a of the first water lubricated bearing 40, and an outer side surface of the flange portion 49a of the second member 49 in the direction along the rotation axis line X is a thrust sliding surface opposed to the flange portion 41a of the second water lubricated bearing 41. An outer peripheral surface of the cylindrical portion 48b of the first member 48 is a radial sliding surface opposed to the cylindrical portion 40b of the first water lubricated bearing 40, and an outer peripheral surface of the cylindrical portion 49b of the second member 49 is a radial sliding surface opposed to the cylindrical portion 41b of the second water lubricated bearing 41. To be specific, the third member 50 does not include sliding surfaces which slide on the first and second water lubricated bearings 40 and 41. All the sliding surfaces of the rotor main body 43 are formed on the first and second members 48 and 49 configured to be attached to and detached from the third member 50 by bolts. Each of the flange portions 48a and 49a of the first and second members 48 and 49 projects in a radially outward direction beyond the third member 50. The rotor

core 44 externally fits by an annular recess formed by the flange portions 48a and 49a of the first and second members 48 and 49 and an outer peripheral surface (supporting surface) of the third member 50.

[0022] The propeller member 13 is detachably fixed to an inner peripheral surface of the third member 50 by bolts. The propeller member 13 includes: an outer cylindrical portion 13a which internally fits and is fixed to the third member 50; a plurality of propeller blades 13b projecting in the radially inward direction from an inner peripheral surface of the outer cylindrical portion 13a so as to be spaced apart from one another in the circumferential direction at regular intervals; and an inner cylindrical portion 13c to which radially inner tip ends of the plurality of propeller blades 13b are connected. The inner cylindrical portion 13c is sandwiched between a pair of warhead-shaped separable bosses 51 and 52 such that both ends of the inner cylindrical portion 13c in the direction along the rotation axis line X respectively contact large-diameter ends of the separable bosses 51 and 52. Each of the separable bosses 51 and 52 gradually decreases in diameter toward its tip end. One separable boss 51 includes therein a bolt attaching portion 51a including a bolt hole which is open toward the other side, and the other separable boss 52 includes a bolt attaching portion 52a including a bolt hole corresponding to the bolt hole of the bolt attaching portion 51a. By inserting a bolt 53 into the bolt holes of the bolt attaching portions 51a and 52a, the separable bosses 51 and 52 are integrated with each other so as to compressively sandwich the inner cylindrical portion 13c. Thus, the boss 14 that is a streamlined hollow member which gradually decreases in diameter toward both sides in the direction along the rotation axis line X is formed by the inner cylindrical portion 13c and the separable bosses 51 and 52. Then, by suitably detaching the bolts, the rotor main body 43, the propeller blades 13b, and the separable bosses 51 and 52 can be separated from one another.

[0023] The main channel R where the propeller blades 13b are provided are defined by inner peripheral surfaces of the outer cylindrical portion 13a, the first and second members 48 and 49, the support rings 28 and 29, and the fairings 30 and 31. The main channel R includes a columnar portion; and diameter increasing portions, each of which is continuously formed from one of both ends of the columnar portion in the direction along the rotation axis line X and increases in diameter toward one of both directions along the rotation axis line X. Each of the first and second water intake ports 37a and 38a is located at a boundary portion between the columnar portion and one of the diameter increasing portions.

[0024] The thrust generating apparatus 10 is attached to a movable body configured to be movable relative to the water on or under the water. For example, the thrust generating apparatus 10 is applied as a side thruster configured to generate thrust in the left-right direction of a large vessel. Specifically, as shown in Fig. 3, a hull 60 includes openings 61 and 62 penetrating in the left-right direction. A cylindrical wall 63 projects from the opening 61 toward the inside of the hull, and a cylindrical wall 64 projects from the opening 62 toward the inside of the hull. Opposing ends of the pair of cylindrical walls 63 and 64 are spaced apart from each other, and both ends of the outer casing 21 of the thrust generating apparatus 10 are respectively welded and fixed to these opposing ends of the cylindrical walls 63 and 64.

[0025] Next, operations of the thrust generating apparatus 10 will be explained. When the magnetic field generated by supplying electricity to the armature coils 33 acts on the permanent magnets 45, the rotor 12, the propeller member 13, and the boss 14 integrally rotate. When the propeller blades 13b positively rotate, the water is ejected from the propeller blades 13b toward the right side in Fig. 1. Therefore, the pressure in the vicinity of the second water intake port 38a becomes higher than the pressure on the left

side (upstream side) of the propeller blades 13b in Fig. 1. By this pressure difference, the water in the main channel R flows through the second water intake port 38a into the second water conveyance tube 38 without a pump, and the water in the second water conveyance tube 38 is guided through the check valve 46 to the buffer space S3. Then, the water in the buffer space S3 is ejected from the ejection hole 40c to the first member 48 of the rotor main body 43. This water lubricates and cools the sliding surfaces of the first member 48 and the first water lubricated bearing 40, and a part of the water flows through the gap between the first member 48 and the support ring 28 into the main channel R. The remaining water flows through the gap between an outer peripheral surface of the rotor core 44 and the can 36 to lubricate and cool the sliding surfaces of the second member 49 and the second water lubricated bearing 41. Since the water is ejected from the propeller blades 13b toward the right side in Fig. 1 by the positive rotation of the propeller blades 13b, its reaction force causes the rotor main body 43 to move from the right side to the left side in Fig. 1 in a direction toward the first water lubricated bearing 40. However, the water having flowed through the second water intake port 38a into the second water conveyance tube 38 at this time is ejected through the ejection hole 40c of the first water lubricated bearing 40 toward the rotor main body 43. Therefore, the rotor main body 43 can be supported by the ejected water, and the portion between the first water lubricated bearing 40 and the rotor main body 43 is suitably lubricated.

[0026] In contrast, when the propeller blades 13b negatively rotate, the water is ejected from the propeller blades 13b toward the left side in Fig. 1. Therefore, the pressure in the vicinity of the first water intake port 37a becomes higher than the pressure on the right side (upstream side) of the propeller blades 13b in Fig. 1. By this pressure difference, the water in the main channel R flows through the first water intake port 37a

into the first water conveyance tube 37 without a pump, and the water in the first water conveyance tube 37 is guided through the check valve 47 to the buffer space S4. Then, the water in the buffer space S4 is ejected from the ejection hole 41c to the second member 49 of the rotor main body 43. This water lubricates and cools the sliding surfaces of the second member 49 and the second water lubricated bearing 41, and a part of the water flows through the gap between the second member 49 and the support ring 29 into the main channel R. The remaining water flows through the gap between the outer peripheral surface of the rotor core 44 and the can 36 to lubricate and cool the sliding surfaces of the first member 48 and the first water lubricated bearing 40. Since the water is ejected from the propeller blades 13b toward the left side in Fig. 1 by the negative rotation of the propeller blades 13b, its reaction force causes the rotor main body 43 to move from the left side to the right side in Fig. 1 in a direction toward the second water lubricated bearing 41. However, the water having flowed through the first water intake port 37a into the first water conveyance tube 37 at this time is ejected through the ejection hole 41c of the second water lubricated bearing 41 toward the rotor main body 43. Therefore, the rotor main body 43 can be supported by the ejected water, and the portion between the second water lubricated bearing 41 and the rotor main body 43 is suitably lubricated.

[0027] According to the above configuration in which the propeller blades 13b rotate positively and negatively together with the rotor 12, the sliding surfaces of the first water lubricated bearing 40 and the rotor main body 43 and the sliding surfaces of the second water lubricated bearing 41 and the rotor main body 43 can be lubricated by the water, and the rotor core 44 and the like which are provided in the vicinity of the sliding surfaces and generate heat by eddy current can be cooled by the water. Portions where specific pressure increases when the propeller blades 13b positively rotate (that is, the

sliding surfaces of the first member 48 and the first water lubricated bearing 40) are different from portions where specific pressure increases when the propeller blades 13b negatively rotate (that is, the sliding surfaces of the second member 49 and the second water lubricated bearing 41). However, the portions where the specific pressure is high can be accurately lubricated in accordance with the rotational direction of the propeller blades 13b by a simple configuration.

[0028] Since the check valve 47 is provided at the first water conveyance tube 37, and the check valve 46 is provided at the second water conveyance tube 38, one-way flow of water from the first water intake port 37a toward the second water lubricated bearing 41 and one-way flow of water from the second water intake port 38a toward the first water lubricated bearing 40 are ensured, and the water is unlikely to remain in the first and second water conveyance tubes 37 and 38. Thus, a cooling performance improves. Further, the water flowing in the main channel R enters through the communication ports that are the gaps C1 and C2 and the holes 30c and 31c into the cooling space S1 formed between the outer casing 21 and the inner casing 22. Therefore, the coils 33, the stator core 32, the rotor core 44, and the like can be cooled by the water in the cooling space S1. In addition, since the cooling space S1 communicates with the main channel R where new water flows, the temperature increase of the water in the cooling space S1 can be suppressed. The gaps C1 and C2 and the holes 30c and 31c that are the communication ports are separately provided upstream and downstream of the propeller blades 13b. Therefore, the replacement of water in the cooling space S1 is accelerated by this pressure difference.

[0029] Next, maintenance work of the thrust generating apparatus 10 will be explained. For example, when the first and second members 48 and 49 or the first and second water lubricated bearings 40 and 41 are replaced with new ones due to the deteriorations of the

sliding surfaces of the first and second water lubricated bearings 40 and 41 and the rotor main body 43, the bolts are suitably detached to disassemble the fairings 30 and 31, the support rings 28 and 29, and the third and fourth casings 26 and 27. This realizes easy access to the first and second water lubricated bearings 40 and 41 and the rotor main body 43.

[0030] Regarding the rotor main body 43, the first and second members 48 and 49 are detected from the third member 50 by suitably detecting the bolts, and the new first and second members 48 and 49 are fixed to the third member 50. With this, it is unnecessary to pull out the rotor core 44 from the third member 50, and the replacement work of all the sliding surfaces of the rotor main body 43 can be performed while maintaining a state where the rotor core 44 externally fits the third member 50. Therefore, it is unnecessary for an operator to worry about peel-off of the corrosion resistant coating of the rotor core 44, and the ease of maintenance improves.

[0031] The rotor main body 43, the propeller member 13, and the separable bosses 51 and 52 are detachably fixed to one another by bolts. Therefore, for example, when the propeller blades 13b break, the propeller member 13 is detached from the rotor main body 43 and the separable bosses 51 and 52 and can be easily replaced with a new one. Thus, the ease of maintenance improves.

[0032] **Embodiment 2**

As shown in Figs. 4 and 5, a stator 111 of a thrust generating apparatus 110 of Embodiment 2 includes an annular outer casing 121 and an annular inner casing 22 provided on an inner periphery side of the outer casing 121. A cylindrical space formed between the outer casing 121 and the inner casing 22 is the cooling space S1. The outer casing 121 includes: a casing main body 130 including an upper surface opening 130i; and a cover 131 configured to close the upper surface opening 130i of the casing main

body 130. Since components of the thrust generating apparatus 110 are the same as those of Embodiment 1 except for the outer casing 121, the same reference signs are used for the same components, and detailed explanations thereof are omitted.

[0033] The casing main body 130 includes: vertical wall portions 130a and 130b opposed to each other in the left-right direction; inner cylindrical portions 130d and 130e, each of which projects in the outward direction along the rotation axis line X and which respectively form side openings 130f and 130g of the vertical wall portions 130a and 130b; and a flange portion 130h formed at upper ends of the vertical wall portions 130a and 130b. For example, end portions of the inner cylindrical portions 130d and 130e are respectively welded and fixed to opposing ends of the cylindrical walls 63 and 64 shown in Fig. 3. The main channel R is defined by inner peripheral surfaces of the inner cylindrical portions 130d and 130e, the support rings 28 and 29, the rotor main body 43, and the outer cylindrical portion 13a. The cover 131 is detachably fixed to the flange portion 130h of the casing main body 130 by bolts B. The cover 131 is a flat plate on which a cable through hole 131a is partially formed. The cable through hole 131a is closed by the lid 23.

[0034] A gap C3 is formed between the casing main body 130 and the support ring 28, and a gap C4 is formed between the casing main body 130 and the support ring 29. The gaps C3 and C4 serve as communication ports through which the cooling space S1 communicates with the main channel R. The inner casing 22 (specifically, the second casing 25) is connected to the cover 131 of the outer casing 121 via the bracket 39 and is not fixed to the casing main body 130. Therefore, at the time of maintenance, only by detaching the bolts B and detaching the cover 131 from the casing main body 130, the components of the thrust generating apparatus 110 except for the outer casing 121 can be taken out through the upper surface opening 130i to the upper side. Here, the end

portions of the inner cylindrical portions 130d and 130e of the casing main body 130 are fixed to the hull (for example, the opposing ends of the cylindrical walls 63 and 64 shown in Fig. 3). Therefore, by detaching the cover 131, the components of the thrust generating apparatus 110 except for the outer casing 121 can be taken out through the upper surface opening 130i to the hull, and the maintenance work can be performed in the hull.

[0035] **Embodiment 3**

As shown in Figs. 6 and 7, according to the thrust generating apparatus of Embodiment 3, the propeller blades of a propeller member 113 can be disassembled individually. Since the components except for the propeller member 113 and a boss 114 are the same as those of Embodiment 1 or 2, explanations thereof are omitted.

[0036] The propeller member 113 is constituted by assembling a plurality of (for example, six) separable propeller members 170. Each of the separable propeller members 170 includes: a circular-arc plate portion 170a on which bolt holes 170d are formed; a propeller blade 170b projecting in the radially inward direction from the circular-arc plate portion 170a; and a stopper protrusion portion 113c projecting in the radially inward direction from a radially inward tip end of the propeller blade 170b.

[0037] The boss 114 includes a pair of separable bosses 151 and 152 configured to be separable in both directions along the rotation axis line X. Each of the separable bosses 151 and 152 is formed in a warhead shape which gradually decreases in diameter in the outward direction along the rotation axis line. The boss having a streamlined shape is formed such that opposing end surfaces of the separable bosses 151 and 152 are attached to each other. The left-side separable boss 151 includes a bolt hole 151a penetrating in the direction along the rotation axis line. A plurality of recesses 151b configured to respectively sandwich the stopper protrusion portions 113c are radially formed on an end

surface of the left-side separable boss 151, the end surface being opposed to the right-side separable boss 152. Each of the recesses 151b extends from a radially intermediate position, located between the center and outer peripheral end of the end surface of the separable boss 151, up to the outer peripheral end of the end surface of the separable boss 151. Each of the recesses 151b is open in the radially outward direction.

[0038] An accommodating recess 152a for accommodating a bolt receiving member 153 is formed at the center of an end surface of the right-side separable boss 152, the end surface being opposed to the left-side separable boss 151. A plurality of recesses 152b configured to respectively sandwich the stopper protrusion portions 113c are radially formed on the end surface of the right-side separable boss 152, the end surface being opposed to the left-side separable boss 151. The recesses 152b are formed to correspond to the recesses 151b when the opposing end surfaces of the left and right separable bosses 151 and 152 contact each other.

[0039] In assembling, first, the circular-arc plate portions 170a of the separable propeller members 170 are fixed to an inner peripheral surface of the rotor main body 43 by bolts. Thus, the circular-arc plate portions 170a overlap one another to form a cylindrical shape, and the propeller member 113 is formed by the separable propeller members 170. Next, the bolt receiving member 153 including a bolt hole 153a on which threads are formed is pressed into the accommodating recess 152a of the right-side separable boss 152. Then, by causing the opposing end surfaces of the separable bosses 151 and 152 to contact each other, the opposing recesses 151b and 152b sandwich the stopper protrusion portions 170c of the separable propeller members 170. In this state, a bolt 155 is inserted through the bolt hole 151a and the bolt hole 153a via a washer 154. Thus, the separable bosses 151 and 152 are fixed to each other. Then, at the time of maintenance, by detaching the bolt 155, the rotor main body 43, the separable propeller

members 170, and the separable bosses 151 and 152 can be separated from one another.

[0040] Each of the above embodiments has explained the thrust generating apparatus which can be attached to a common large vessel. However, the thrust generating apparatus of each of the above embodiments may be attached to a movable body configured to be movable relative to the water on or under the water. The thrust generating apparatus of each of the above embodiments is applicable to submersible vessels, tugboats, and research ships and oil drilling rigs which stay at a certain position on the water. Moreover, in the above embodiments, a pump is not used as a pressure source for supplying the water to the water lubricated bearing. However, the pump may be used in a certain period (for example, in a start-up period in which the propeller blade starts rotating or in a period in which the water is forcibly supplied to the water lubricated bearing).

CLAIMS

1. A thrust generating apparatus provided in a liquid and configured to generate thrust by ejecting the liquid,

5 the thrust generating apparatus comprising:

an annular stator including a casing, a plurality of coils being provided on an inner periphery side of the casing;

a rotor provided on an inner periphery side of the stator and including an annular rotor main body at which a plurality of magnets are provided;

10 a propeller blade provided on a radially inner side of the rotor main body and formed integrally with the rotor main body; and

a sliding bearing provided to be opposed to a side surface and outer peripheral surface of the rotor main body and configured to support a thrust load and a radial load, wherein:

15 the casing includes an annular outer casing and an annular inner casing provided on an inner periphery side of the outer casing;

the inner casing includes funnel-shaped fairings respectively provided on both sides of the rotor main body and each formed so as to enlarge a diameter thereof in a direction away from the rotor main body;

20 the fairings are provided on the inner periphery side of the outer casing and integrated with the outer casing so that each is detachable;

the stator includes a coil accommodating space for accommodating a stator core around which the coils wind and a cooling space formed between the outer casing and the inner casing;

a gap is formed between each of outer end portions of the fairings and the outer casing; and

the cooling space communicates through the gap with a main channel where the propeller blade is provided.

5

2. The thrust generating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the inner casing is detachably fixed to a bracket projecting from the outer casing in a radially inward direction; and

the bracket is provided partially in a circumferential direction so as not to divide
10 the cooling space.

3. The thrust generating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a first electric cable connected to the coil and a second electric cable connected to a power supply are connected to each other in the cooling space by a water proof connector.

15

4. The thrust generating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

a hole is formed on each of the fairings so as to be located at a position overlapping an extended axis line of a bolt by which the fairing is fixed to a part of the inner casing; and

20 the cooling space communicates through the hole with the main channel where the propeller blade is provided.

5. The thrust generating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein both ends of the outer casing are respectively welded and fixed to opposing ends of cylindrical

walls of a hull.

6. The thrust generating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the gap forms an annular shape along each of the outer end portions of the fairings.

5

7. A thrust generating apparatus provided in a liquid and configured to generate thrust by ejecting the liquid,

the thrust generating apparatus comprising:

an annular stator at which a plurality of coils are provided;

10 a rotor including a rotor main body at which a plurality of magnets are provided;

a propeller blade provided on a radially inner side of the rotor main body and formed integrally with the rotor main body; and

a boss formed integrally with a radially inner tip end of the propeller blade and provided on a rotation axis line of the rotor, wherein:

15 the rotor main body, the propeller blade, and the boss rotate integrally, and the rotor main body, the propeller blade, and the boss are fixed to one another so that each is detachable;

the boss includes a pair of separable bosses configured to be separable in both directions along the rotation axis line; and

20 the pair of separable bosses are fastened to each other by a bolt and compressively sandwich the radially inner tip end of the propeller blade directly.

8. The thrust generating apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the boss is a hollow member.