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Sun et al.

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(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR OPTICAL FLOW ESTIMATION**

(71) Applicant: **NVIDIA Corporation**, Santa Clara, CA (US)

(72) Inventors: **Deqing Sun**, Providence, RI (US); **Xiaodong Yang**, San Jose, CA (US); **Ming-Yu Liu**, Sunnyvale, CA (US); **Jan Kautz**, Lexington, MA (US)

(73) Assignee: **NVIDIA Corporation**, Santa Clara, CA (US)

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G06N 5/04	(2006.01)

(Continued)

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CPC ***G06T 7/207*** (2017.01); ***G06N 3/0454*** (2013.01); ***G06N 3/08*** (2013.01); ***G06N 5/046*** (2013.01);
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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC G06T 7/207; G06T 7/246; G06T 7/251; G06T 7/97; G06T 3/0093; G06T 2200/28;
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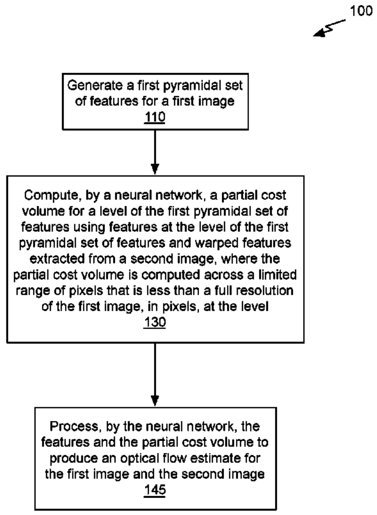
Primary Examiner — Phuoc Tran
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Leydig, Voit & Mayer, Ltd.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method, computer readable medium, and system are disclosed for estimating optical flow between two images. A first pyramidal set of features is generated for a first image and a partial cost volume for a level of the first pyramidal set of features is computed, by a neural network, using features at the level of the first pyramidal set of features and warped features extracted from a second image, where the partial cost volume is computed across a limited range of pixels that is less than a full resolution of the first image, in pixels, at the level. The neural network processes the features and the partial cost volume to produce a refined optical flow estimate for the first image and the second image.

20 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets


100
Generate a first pyramidal set of features for a first image
110
Compute, by a neural network, a partial cost volume for a level of the first pyramidal set of features using features at the level of the first pyramidal set of features and warped features extracted from a second image, where the partial cost volume is computed across a limited range of pixels that is less than a full resolution of the first image, in pixels, at the level
130
Process, by the neural network, the features and the partial cost volume to produce an optical flow estimate for the first image and the second image
145

(51) **Int. Cl.**

G06T 3/00	(2006.01)
G06T 7/00	(2017.01)
G06T 7/246	(2017.01)
G06N 3/04	(2006.01)
G06N 3/08	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***G06T 3/0093*** (2013.01); ***G06T 7/246*** (2017.01); ***G06T 7/251*** (2017.01); ***G06T 7/97*** (2017.01); *G06T 2200/28* (2013.01); *G06T 2207/10016* (2013.01); *G06T 2207/20016* (2013.01); *G06T 2207/20032* (2013.01); *G06T 2207/20084* (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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See application file for complete search history.

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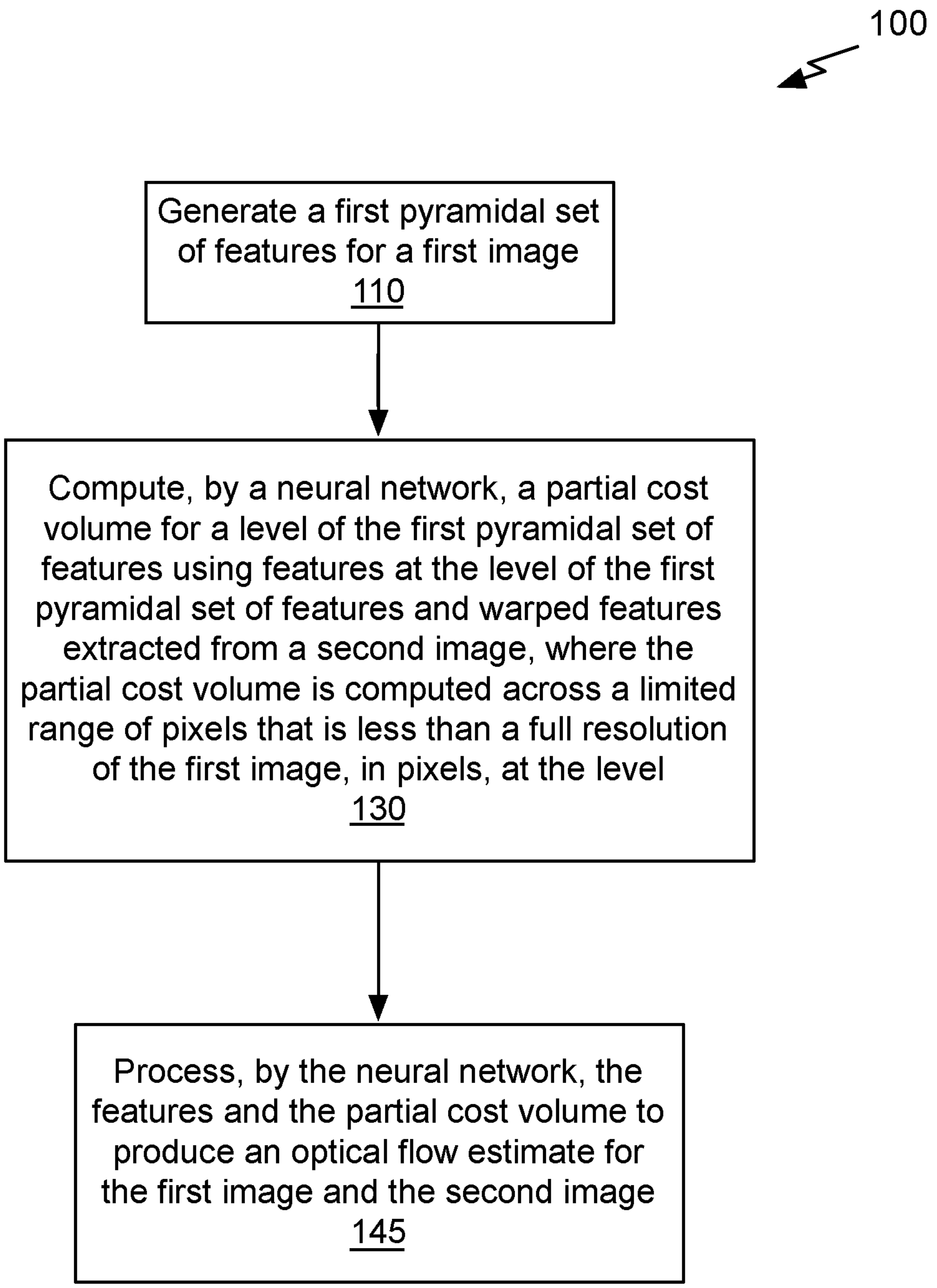
100
Generate a first pyramidal set of features for a first image 110
Compute, by a neural network, a partial cost volume for a level of the first pyramidal set of features using features at the level of the first pyramidal set of features and warped features extracted from a second image, where the partial cost volume is computed across a limited range of pixels that is less than a full resolution of the first image, in pixels, at the level 130
Process, by the neural network, the features and the partial cost volume to produce an optical flow estimate for the first image and the second image 145

Fig. 1A

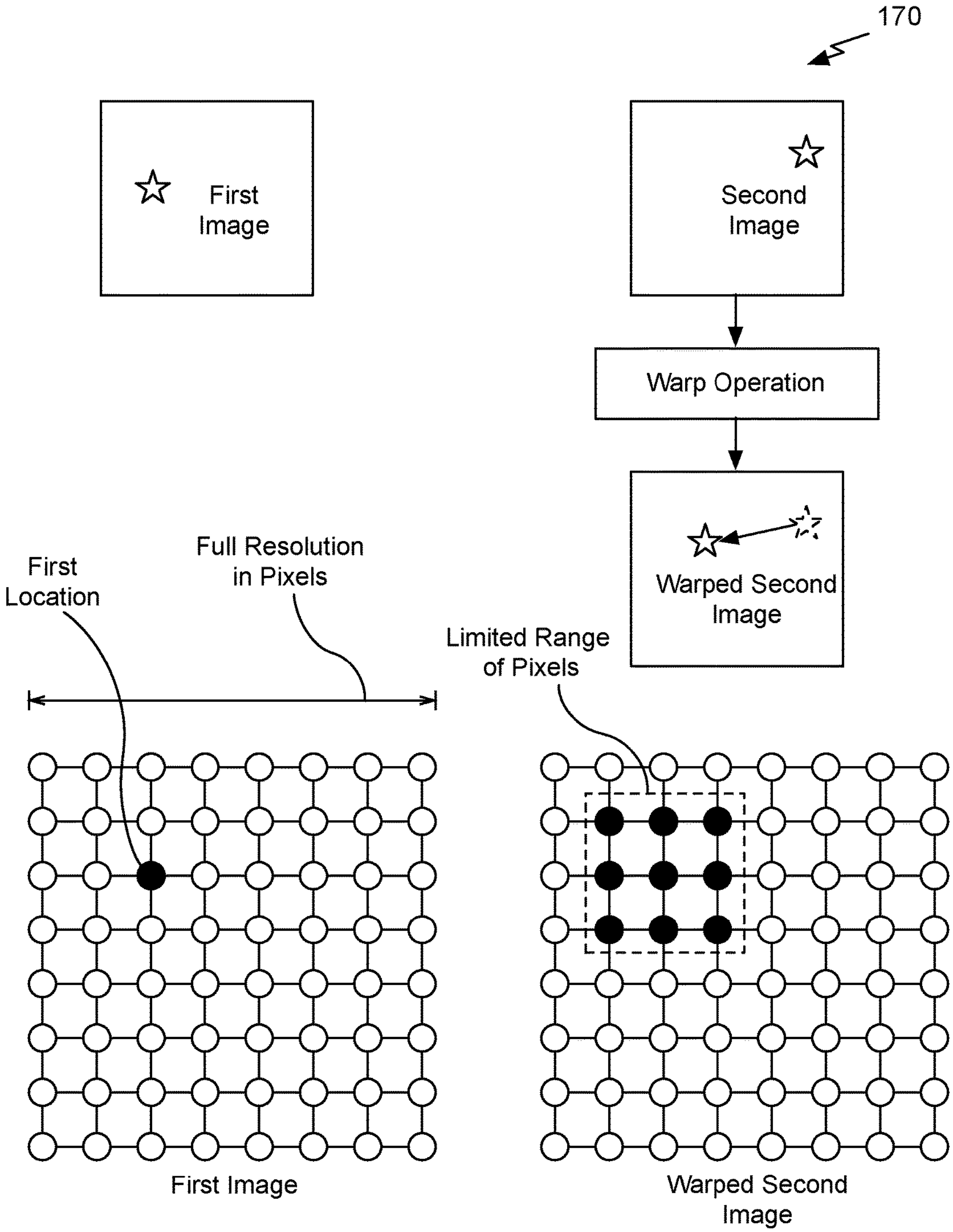
170
First Image
Second Image
Warp Operation
Warped Second Image
First Location
Full Resolution in Pixels
Limited Range of Pixels
First Image
Warped Second Image

Fig. 1B

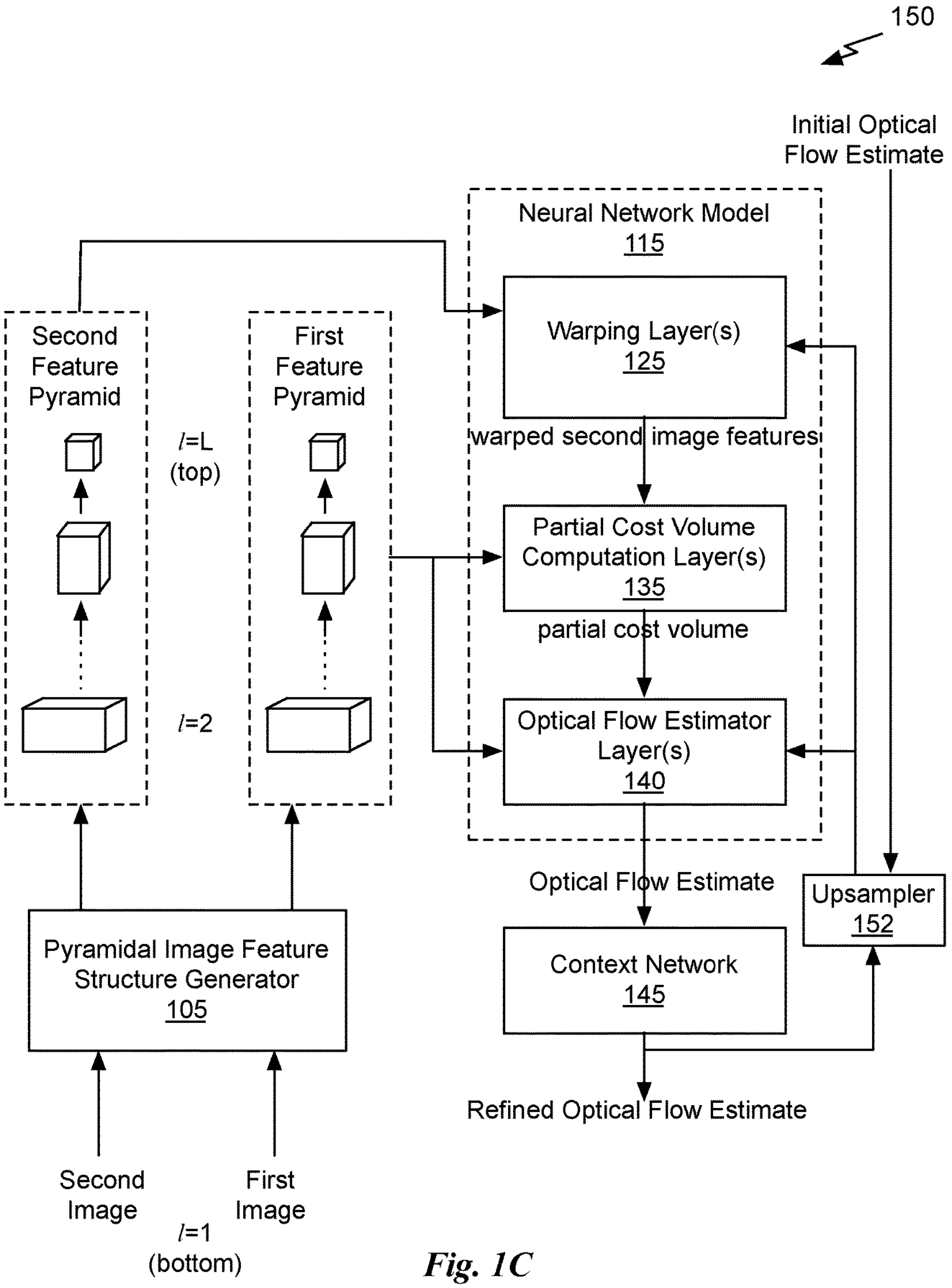
150
Initial Optical Flow Estimate
Neural Network Model 115
Warping Layer(s) 125
warped second image features
Partial Cost Volume Computation Layer(s) 135
partial cost volume
Optical Flow Estimator Layer(s) 140
Optical Flow Estimate
Upsampler 152
Context Network 145
Refined Optical Flow Estimate
Second Feature Pyramid
First Feature Pyramid
l=L (top)
l=2
Pyramidal Image Feature Structure Generator 105
Second Image
First Image
l=1 (bottom)

Fig. 1C

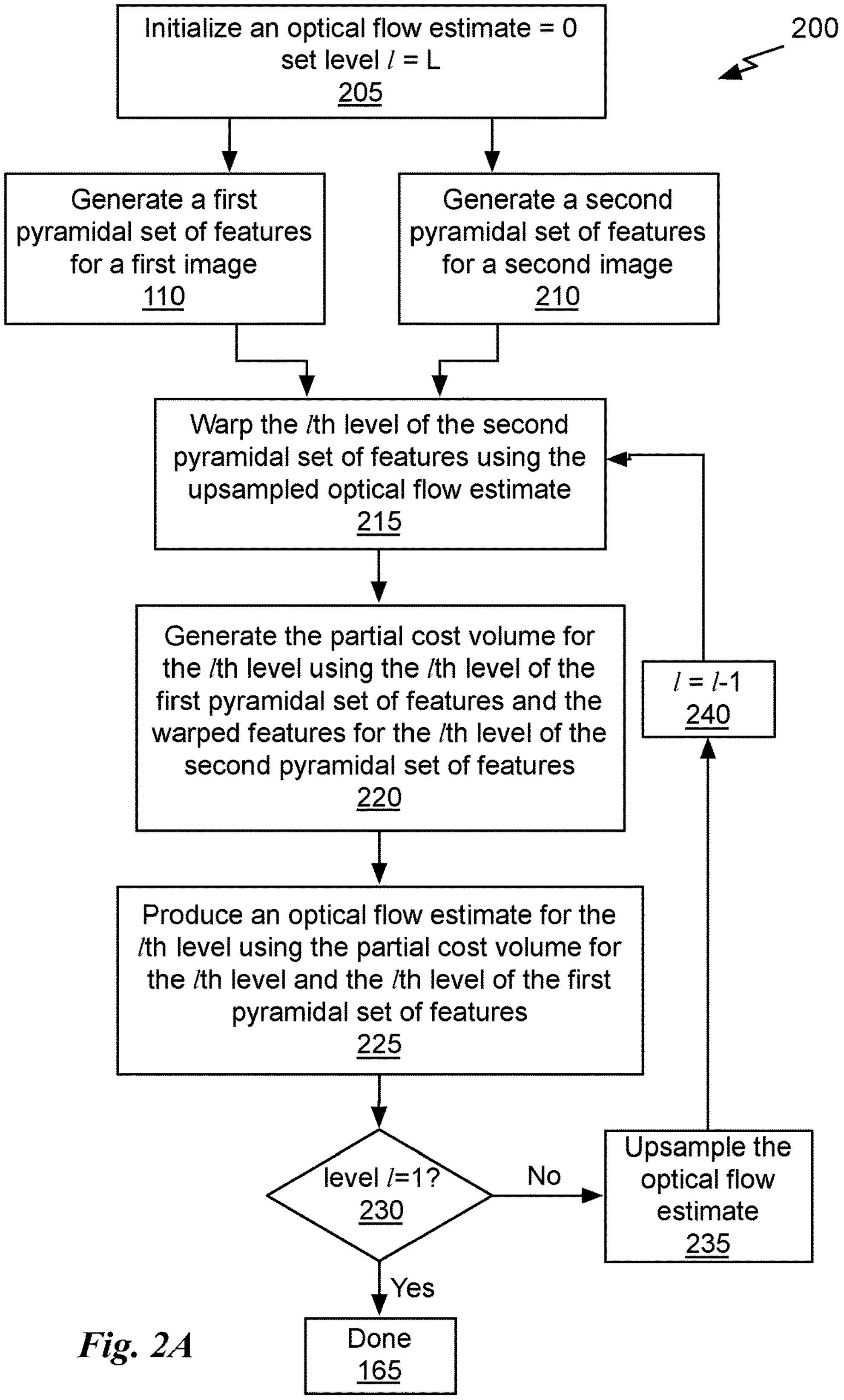
200
Initialize an optical flow estimate = 0
set level *l* = L
205
Generate a first pyramidal set of features for a first image
110
Generate a second pyramidal set of features for a second image
210
Warp the *l*th level of the second pyramidal set of features using the upsampled optical flow estimate
215
Generate the partial cost volume for the *l*th level using the *l*th level of the first pyramidal set of features and the warped features for the *l*th level of the second pyramidal set of features
220
Produce an optical flow estimate for the *l*th level using the partial cost volume for the *l*th level and the *l*th level of the first pyramidal set of features
225
level *l*=1?
230
No
Yes
Upsample the optical flow estimate
235
l = *l*-1
240
Done
165

Fig. 2A

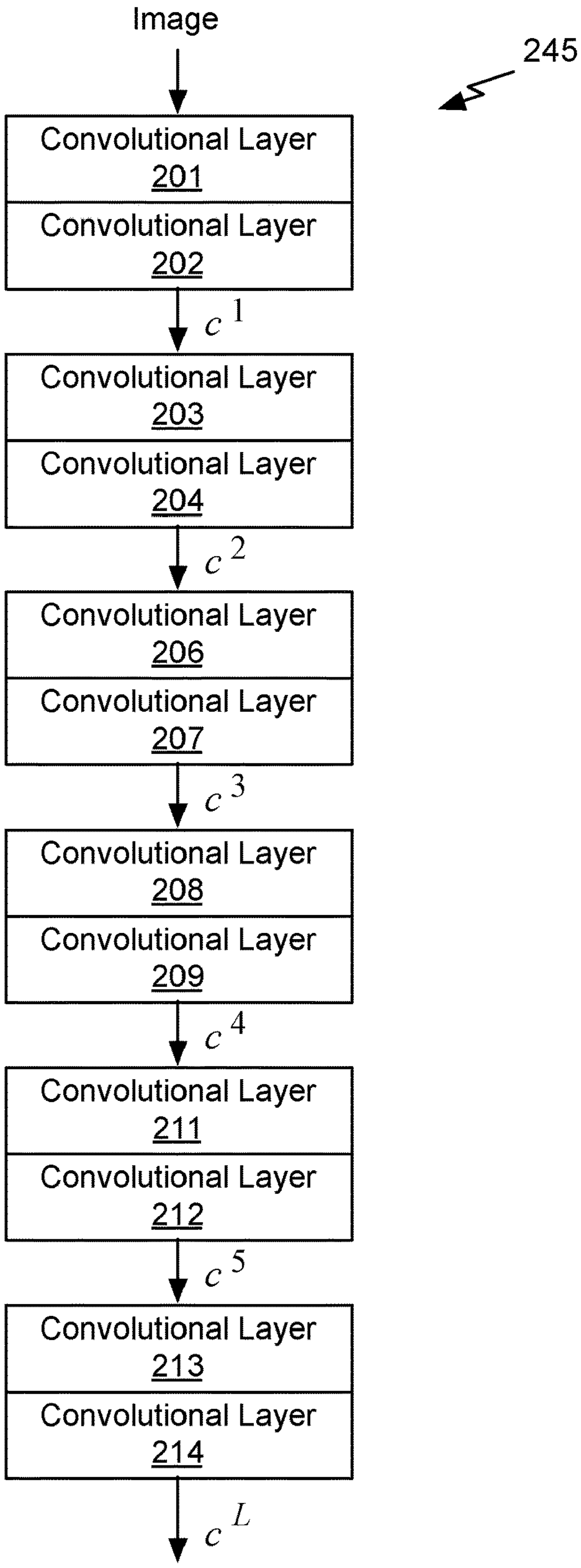
Image
245
Convolutional Layer 201
Convolutional Layer 202
c^1
Convolutional Layer 203
Convolutional Layer 204
c^2
Convolutional Layer 206
Convolutional Layer 207
c^3
Convolutional Layer 208
Convolutional Layer 209
c^4
Convolutional Layer 211
Convolutional Layer 212
c^5
Convolutional Layer 213
Convolutional Layer 214
c^L

Fig. 2B

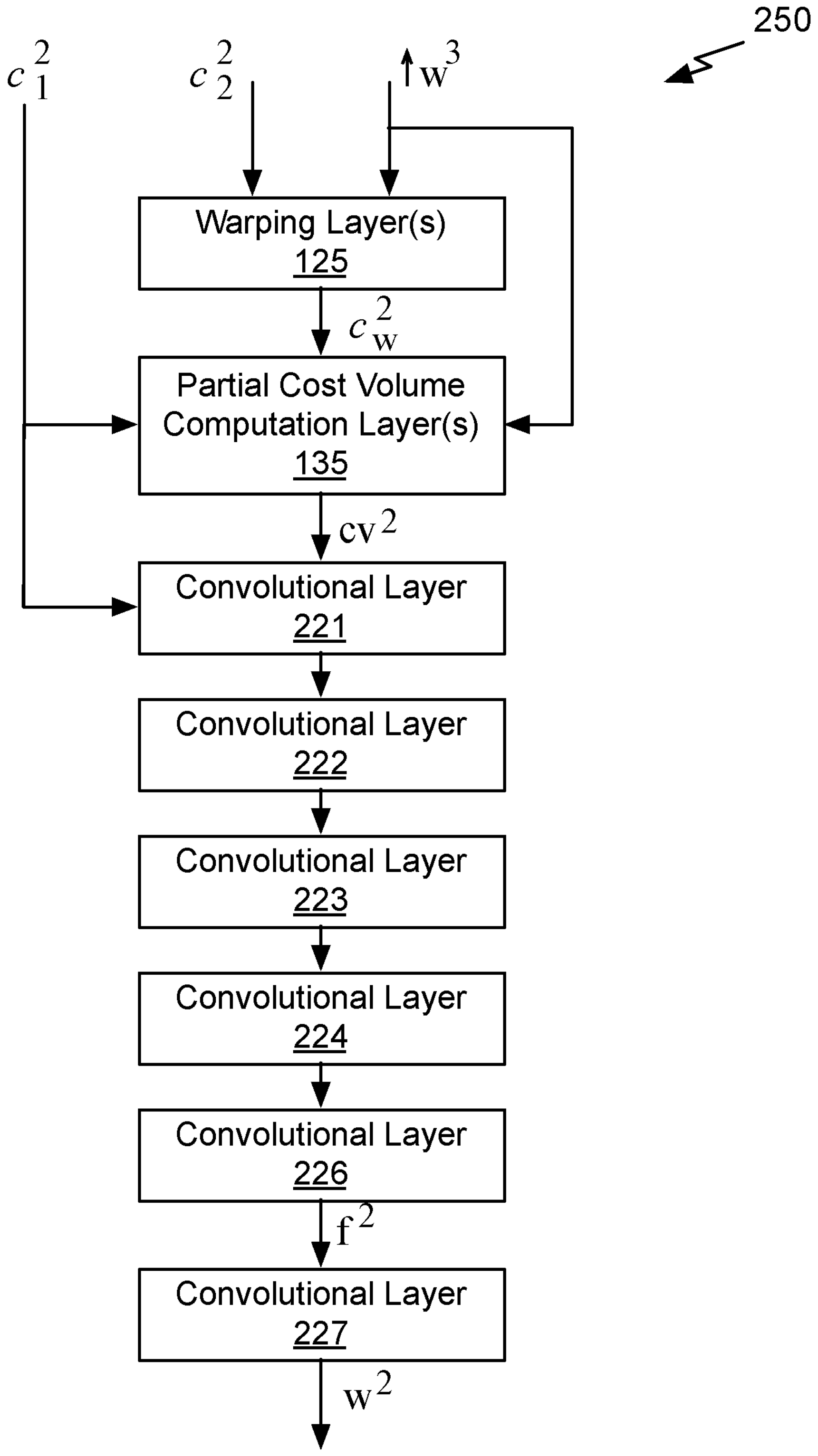
250
c_1^2
c_2^2
$\uparrow w^3$
Warping Layer(s) 125
c_w^2
Partial Cost Volume Computation Layer(s) 135
cv^2
Convolutional Layer 221
Convolutional Layer 222
Convolutional Layer 223
Convolutional Layer 224
Convolutional Layer 226
f^2
Convolutional Layer 227
w^2

Fig. 2C

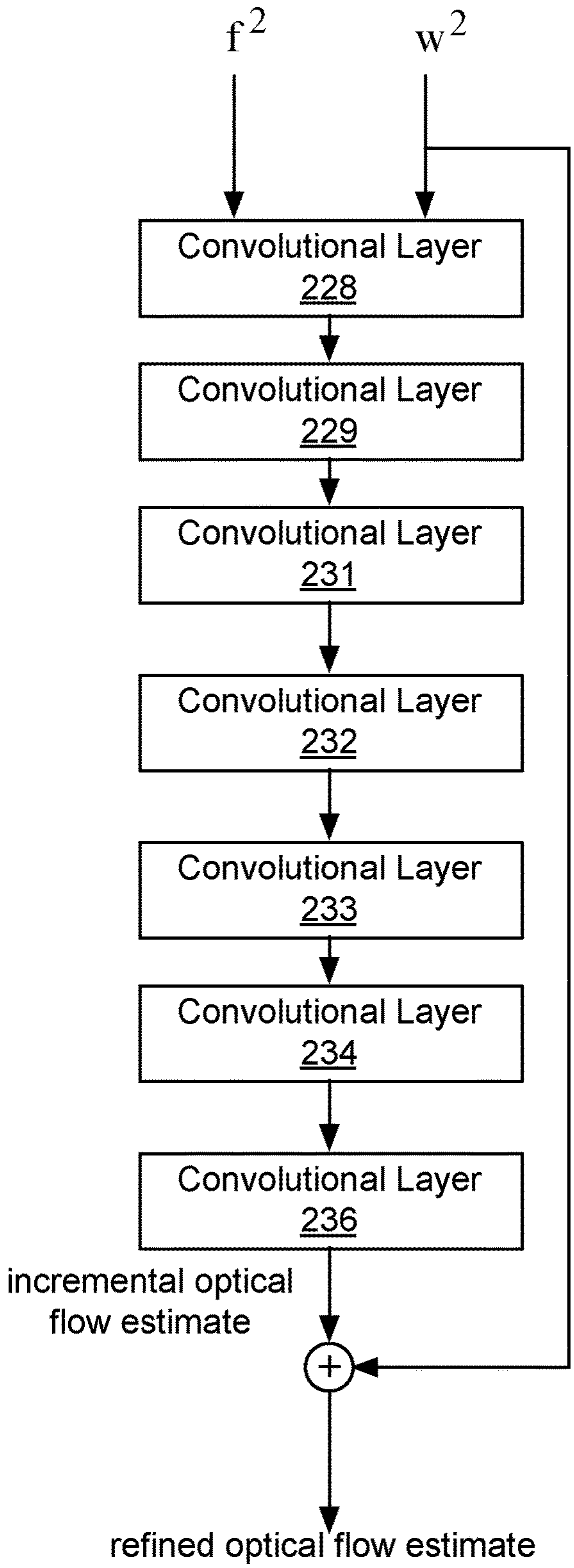
f^2
w^2
Convolutional Layer 228
Convolutional Layer 229
Convolutional Layer 231
Convolutional Layer 232
Convolutional Layer 233
Convolutional Layer 234
Convolutional Layer 236
incremental optical flow estimate
+
refined optical flow estimate

Fig. 2D

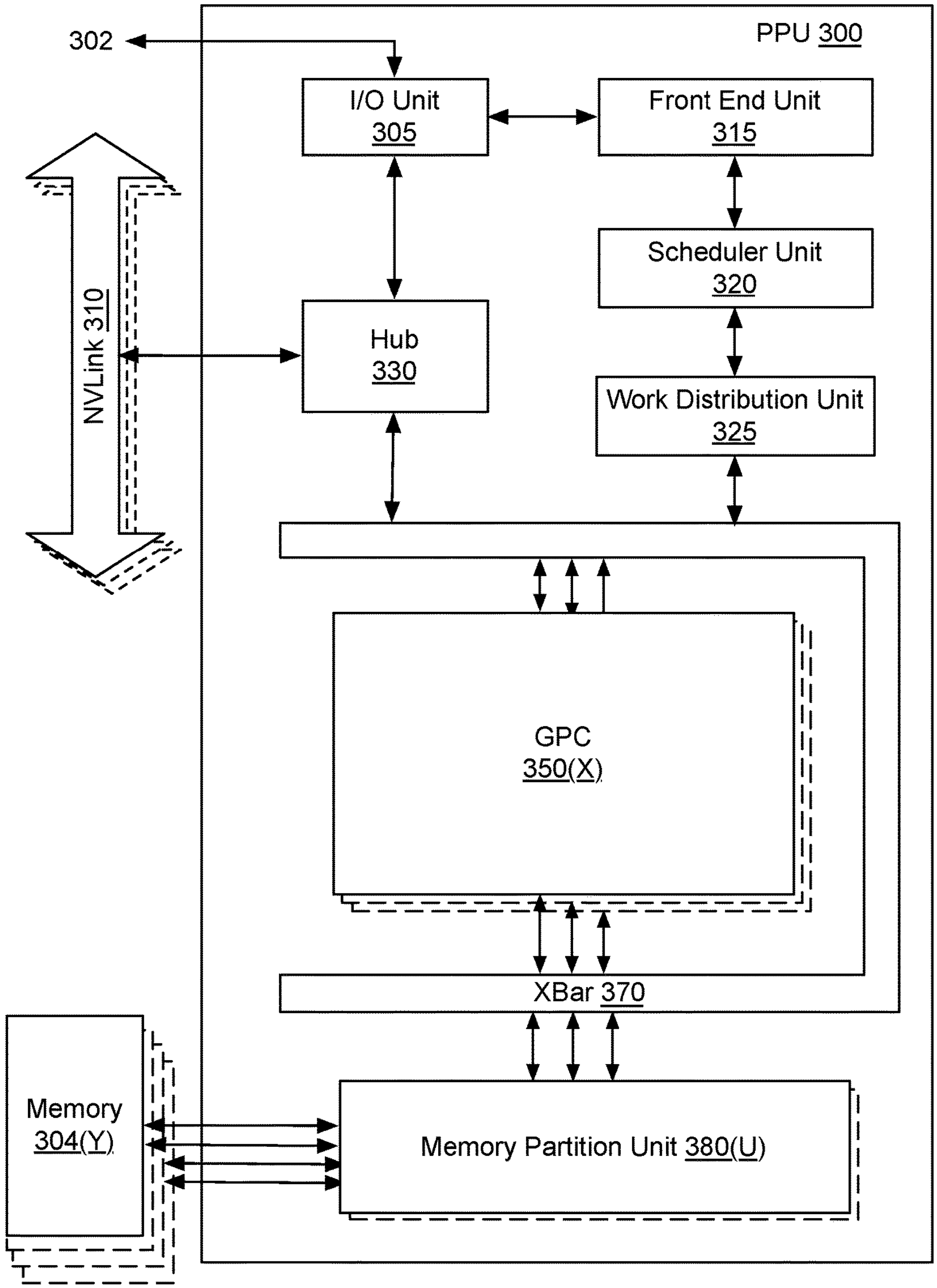
302
PPU 300
I/O Unit 305
Front End Unit 315
Scheduler Unit 320
Work Distribution Unit 325
NVLink 310
Hub 330
GPC 350(X)
XBar 370
Memory 304(Y)
Memory Partition Unit 380(U)

Fig. 3

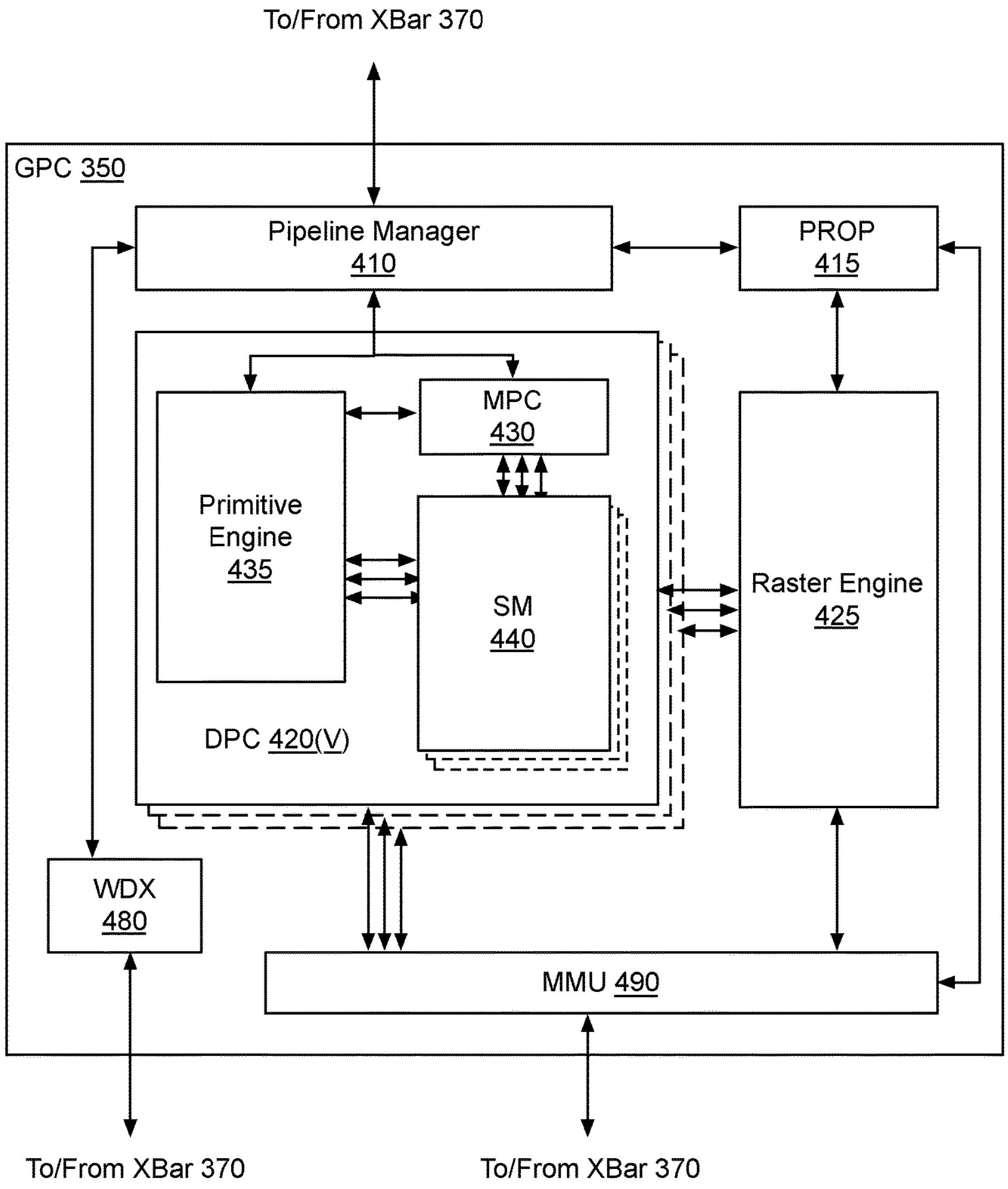
To/From XBar 370
GPC 350
Pipeline Manager 410
PROP 415
MPC 430
Primitive Engine 435
SM 440
DPC 420(V)
Raster Engine 425
WDX 480
MMU 490
To/From XBar 370
To/From XBar 370

Fig. 4A

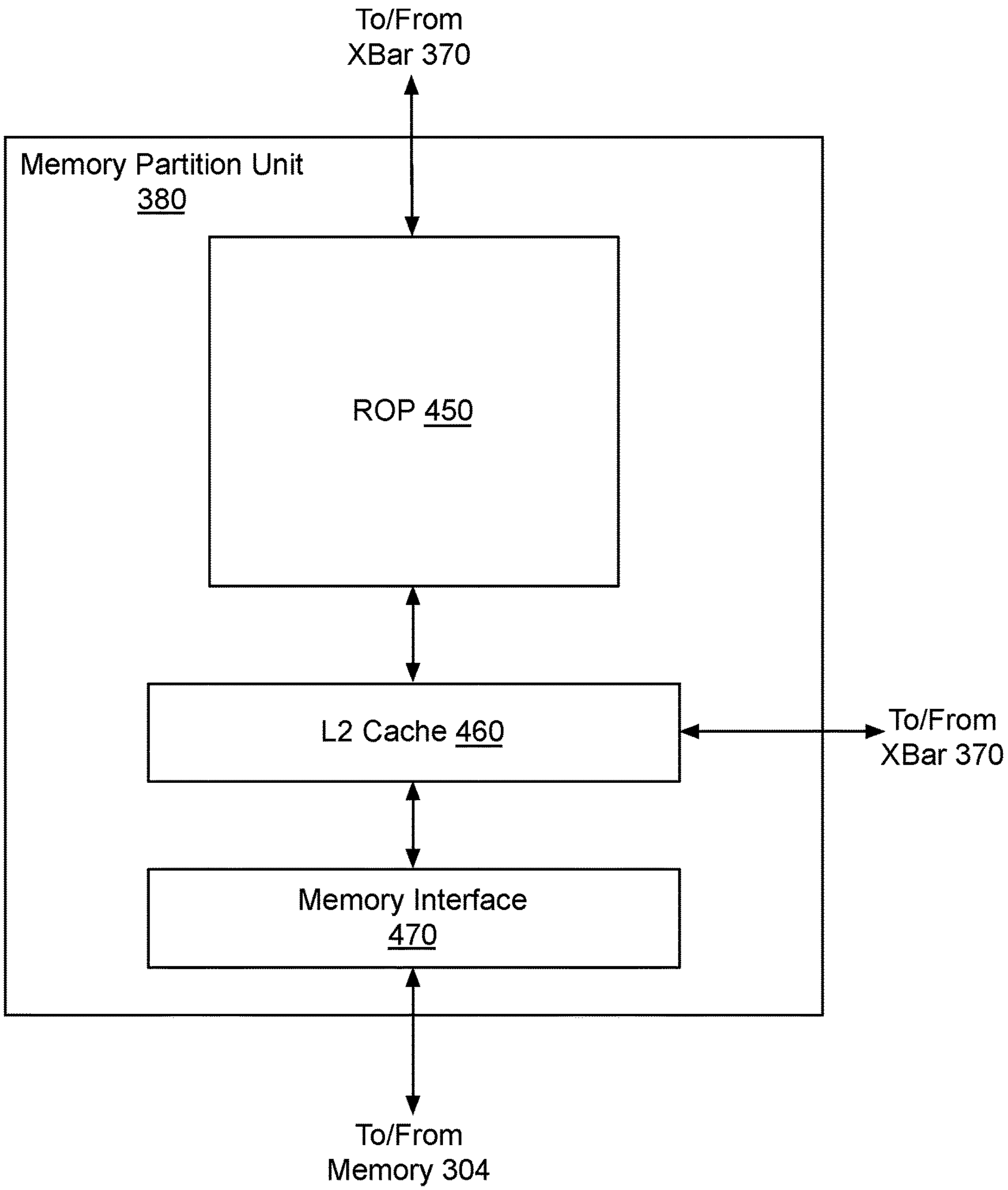
To/From
XBar 370
Memory Partition Unit
380
ROP 450
L2 Cache 460
To/From
XBar 370
Memory Interface
470
To/From
Memory 304

Fig. 4B

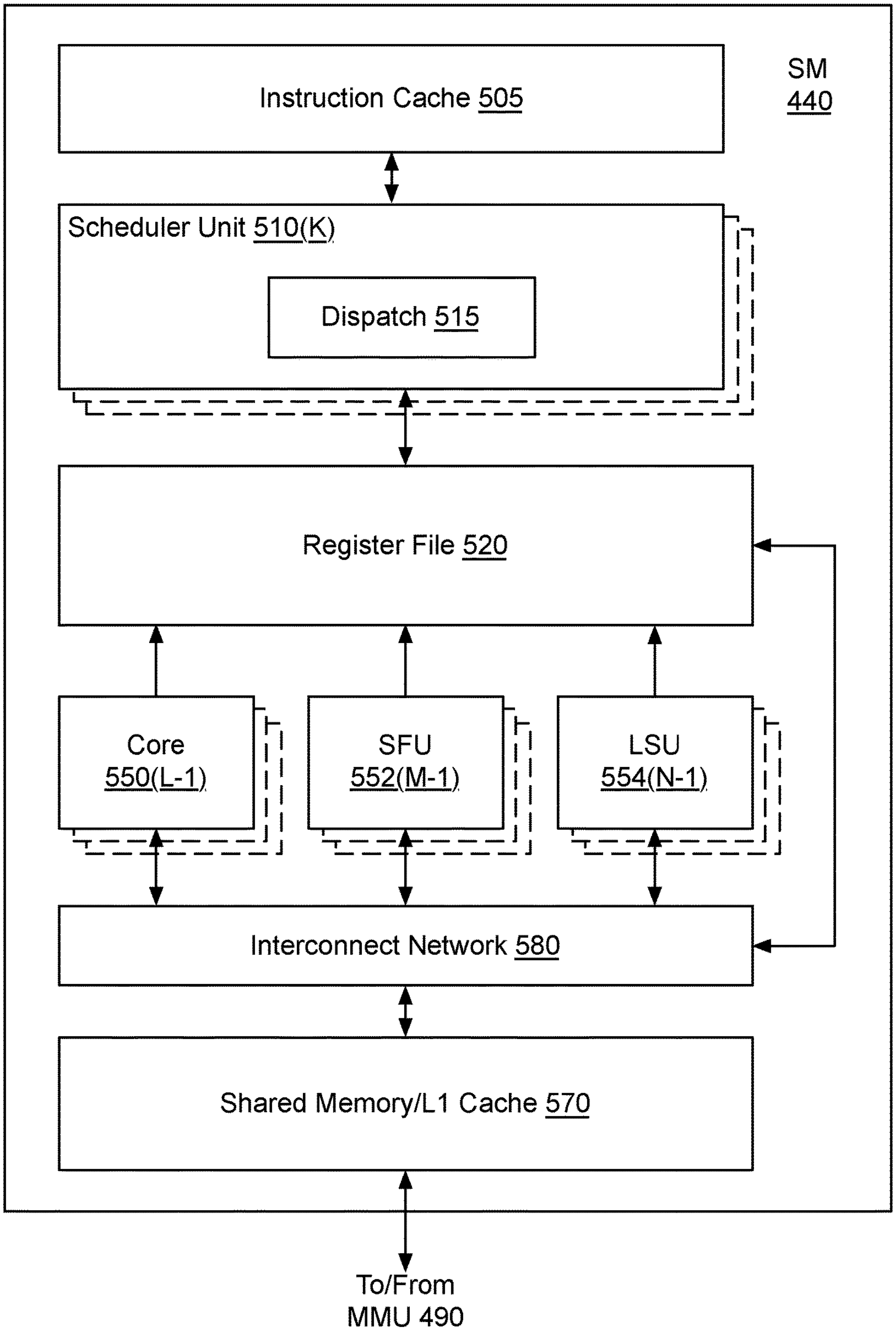
SM
440
Instruction Cache 505
Scheduler Unit 510(K)
Dispatch 515
Register File 520
Core
550(L-1)
SFU
552(M-1)
LSU
554(N-1)
Interconnect Network 580
Shared Memory/L1 Cache 570
To/From
MMU 490

Fig. 5A

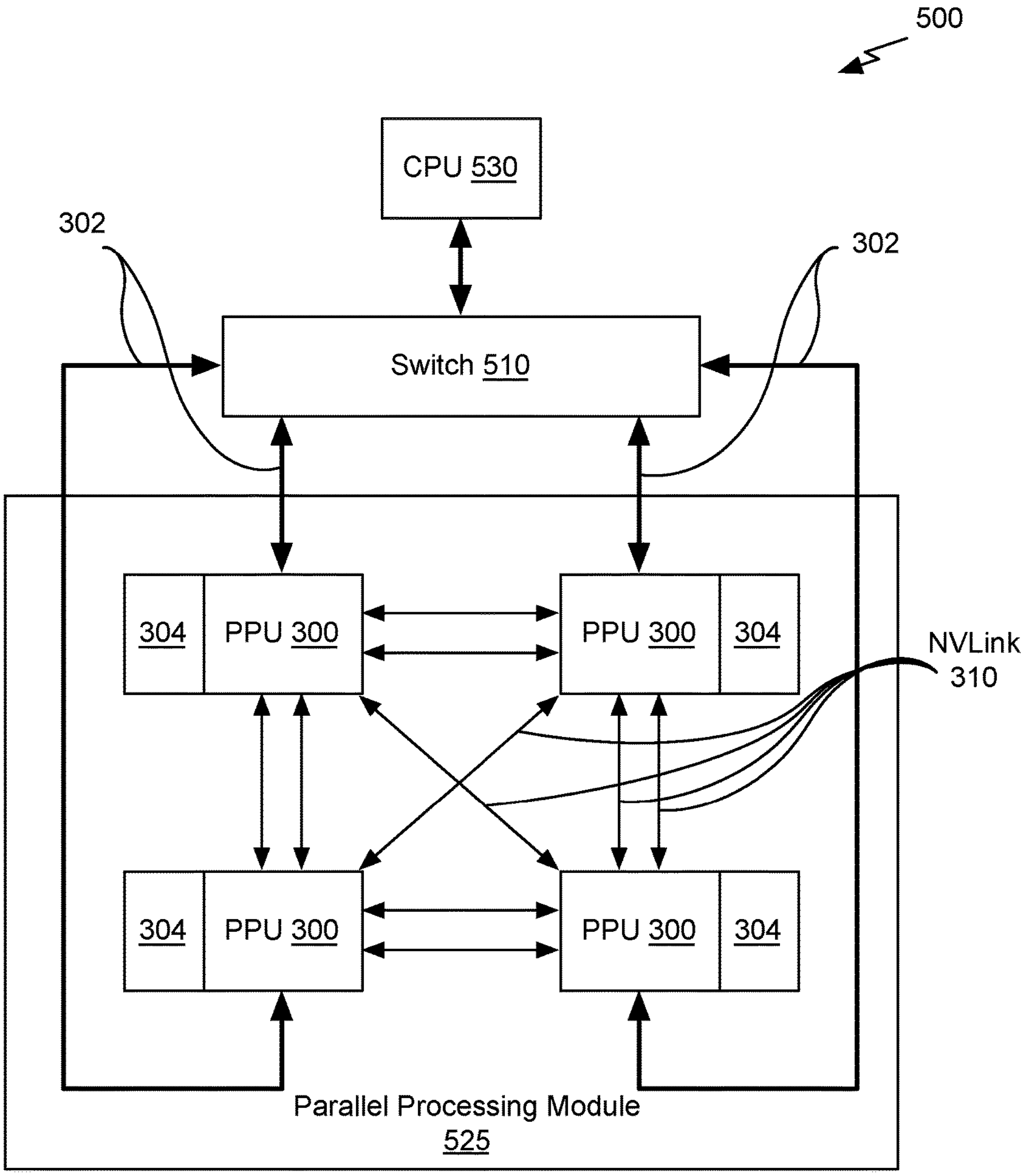
500
CPU 530
302
302
Switch 510
304
PPU 300
PPU 300
304
NVLink
310
304
PPU 300
PPU 300
304
Parallel Processing Module
525

Fig. 5B

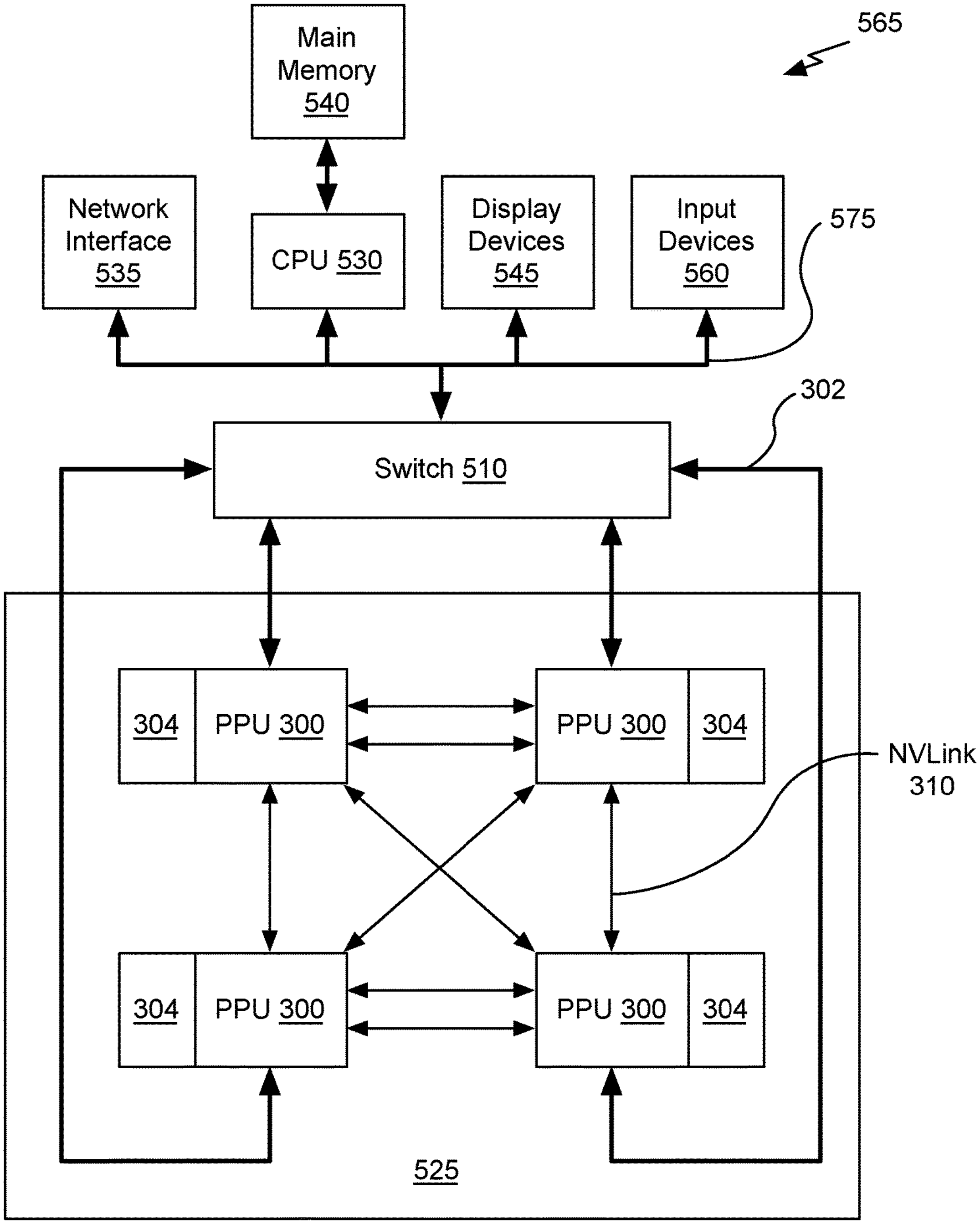
565
Main Memory 540
Network Interface 535
CPU 530
Display Devices 545
Input Devices 560
575
302
Switch 510
304
PPU 300
PPU 300
304
NVLink 310
304
PPU 300
PPU 300
304
525

Fig. 5C

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR OPTICAL FLOW ESTIMATION

CLAIM OF PRIORITY

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/483,145 titled "PYRAMIDAL CNN MODEL FOR OPTICAL FLOW ESTIMATION," filed Apr. 7, 2017, the entire contents of which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to optical flow and techniques for estimating optical flow for images.

BACKGROUND

Optical flow estimation is a core computer vision problem and has many applications, e.g., in autonomous driving, video editing, and action recognition. Most top-performing conventional techniques for estimating optical flow adopt an energy minimization approach. However, optimizing a complex energy function is usually computationally expensive for real-time applications. Other conventional approaches have large memory requirements for storing a system model. The large memory requirements cannot always be satisfied by embedded and mobile devices. There is a need for addressing these issues and/or other issues associated with the prior art.

SUMMARY

A method, computer readable medium, and system are disclosed for estimating optical flow for images. A first pyramidal set of features is generated for a first image and a partial cost volume for a level of the first pyramidal set of features is computed, by a neural network, using features at the level of the first pyramidal set of features and warped features extracted from a second image, where the partial cost volume is computed across a limited range of pixels that is less than a full resolution of the first image, in pixels, at the level. The neural network processes the features and the partial cost volume to produce a refined optical flow estimate for the first image and the second image.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1**A illustrates a flowchart of a method for estimating optical flow, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **1**B is a conceptual diagram of illustrating a warped second image and limited range of pixels used to compute a partial cost volume, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **1**C illustrates a block diagram of an optical flow system, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **2**A illustrates a flowchart of a method for estimating optical flow, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **2**B illustrates a block diagram of a feature pyramid extraction network, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **2**C illustrates a block diagram of a warping, partial cost volume, and flow estimator network, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **2**D illustrates a block diagram of a context network, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **3** illustrates a parallel processing unit, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **4**A illustrates a general processing cluster within the parallel processing unit of FIG. **3**, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **4**B illustrates a memory partition unit of the parallel processing unit of FIG. **3**, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **5**A illustrates the streaming multi-processor of FIG. **4**A, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **5**B is a conceptual diagram of a processing system implemented using the PPU of FIG. **3**, in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. **5**C illustrates an exemplary system in which the various architecture and/or functionality of the various previous embodiments may be implemented.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

An optical flow estimation system estimates the two-dimensional (2D) motion of pixels between two images. A compact but effective convolutional neural network (CNN) model for optical flow estimation is described that exploits the principles of pyramid structures, warping, and correlation. Features extracted from a first image and features extracted from a second image are both stored as pyramidal structures of image features. The CNN model uses an upsampled optical flow computed for the previous (l−1) level of the pyramid structures to warp the features of the second image for the lth level. The CNN model computes a partial cost volume based on the correlation between features of the first image and the warped features of the second image. The correlation output provides strong cues to estimate the flow increment and is processed by convolution layers to refine the current optical flow. A method, computer-readable medium, and system embodiment is disclosed. The algorithm may be executed by a GPU, CPU, or any processor capable of implementing the CNN model.

FIG. **1**A illustrates a flowchart of a method **100** for estimating optical flow, in accordance with one embodiment. Although method **100** is described in the context of a processing unit, the method **100** may also be performed by a program, custom circuitry, or by a combination of custom circuitry and a program. For example, the method **100** may be executed by a GPU (graphics processing unit), CPU (central processing unit), or any processor capable of implementing a neural network model. Furthermore, persons of ordinary skill in the art will understand that any system that performs method **100** is within the scope and spirit of embodiments of the present invention.

At step **110**, a first pyramidal set of features is generated for a first image. In one embodiment, a second pyramidal set of features is also generated for a second image, where the second image is immediately after the first image in a video sequence. A pyramidal set of features is generated to have L levels, where each level l includes feature representations associated with a different resolution (in pixels) of the image. In one embodiment, the bottom (l=1) level of the pyramidal set of features is the first image. A higher (l=2) level of the pyramidal set of features is generated by convolving the image data (i.e., color and/or depth values for each pixel in the first image) with a filter. In one embodiment, the filter is 3×3 pixels and a stride of 2 is used to generate one or more features for each application of the filter. In one embodiment, each subsequent (l+1) level in the pyramidal set of features is generated by downsampling the features from the lower (l) level in the pyramidal set of features.

In contrast with a conventional image pyramid, where each level is a two-dimensional array of color values generated by downsampling color values of a higher resolution image, each level of the feature pyramid is three-dimensional. The third dimension is a number of channels, where each channel corresponds to a different feature for the same pixel location. In one embodiment, the pyramidal set of features is generated by a CNN having multiple layers and each layer of the neural network generates one channel of the features. In one embodiment, the number of feature channels in a pyramidal set of features having 7 levels is 16 at the bottom layer (l=1), increasing to 32, 64, 96, 128, and 196 at the top (l=7) level. Features at higher levels of the pyramidal set of features tend to capture global structures within the image, whereas features at lower levels describe fine details of the image.

A drawback of conventional image pyramid having fixed values at each level is that the raw images used to generate the conventional image pyramid do not provide good features to establish correspondence between different images in a video sequence, particularly in the presence of shadows and lighting changes. Therefore, the conventional image pyramid is replaced with a feature pyramid (i.e., pyramidal set of features) and, when the feature pyramid is generated using a neural network, the parameters used to generate the features may be learned through training.

At step **130**, a partial cost volume for a level of the first pyramidal set of features is computed, by a neural network, using features at the level of the first pyramidal set of features and warped features extracted from a second image, where the partial cost volume is computed across a limited range of pixels that is less than a full resolution of the first image, in pixels, at the level. The warping and limited range of pixels is described in more detail in conjunction with FIG. **1**B.

Conventional optical flow estimation techniques compute a full cost volume, building the full cost volume at a single scale, which is both computationally expensive and memory intensive. By contrast, constructing the partial cost volume at multiple pyramid levels results in optical flow estimation models that are computationally accurate and efficient.

At step **145**, the neural network processes the features and the partial cost volume, to produce an optical flow estimate for the first image and the second image. In one embodiment, the optical flow estimation technique iteratively processes each level of the feature pyramid structures (i.e., each pyramidal set of features), starting at the top level (l=L) for the first image and the second image using an optical flow estimate from the previous iteration to refine the optical flow estimate until the target level is reached (l=1). At the start of the process, the optical flow estimate is initialized. In one embodiment, the optical flow estimate is further processed to produce a refined optical flow estimate.

For the first iteration, the top (l=L) level of the feature pyramid for the second image is warped toward the top level of the feature pyramid for the first image using the initial optical flow estimate. Importantly, the feature pyramid structures and warping enable a reduction in the search range (in pixels) used to compute the partial cost volume. The partial cost volume is computed for the top level using the top level of the first feature pyramid and the warped top level of the second feature pyramid. The optical flow estimate is then computed using the top level of the first feature pyramid, the cost volume of the top level, and the initial optical flow estimate. The computed optical flow estimate is then upsampled and the process is repeated (starting at the warping) for the (l=l−1) level of the feature pyramids. The process continues until the bottom level of the feature pyramids is used to produce a final optical flow estimate.

More illustrative information will now be set forth regarding various optional architectures and features with which the foregoing framework may or may not be implemented, per the desires of the user. It should be strongly noted that the following information is set forth for illustrative purposes and should not be construed as limiting in any manner. Any of the following features may be optionally incorporated with or without the exclusion of other features described.

FIG. **1**B is a conceptual diagram **170** illustrating a warped second image and limited range of pixels used to compute a partial cost volume, in accordance with one embodiment. An object (star) at a first location in the first image has moved to a second location in a second image, where the first and second images are included in a video sequence. A warping operation is performed on the second image to move the object from the second location to a third location that is closer to the first location. Note that although the object may be assumed to be represented as image data, in one embodiment, the object may be represented as one or more features generated for a level of a feature pyramidal structure. Each feature may correspond to a pixel location in the first and second images. The features of the second image for a highest level of the feature pyramidal structure are warped towards the first image using an initial optical flow. For subsequent optical flow estimates, the features of the second image for a subsequent (i.e., next lower) level of the feature pyramidal structure are warped towards the first image using the optical flow estimate computed for the higher level.

To estimate the optical flow, movement of the object from the first location in the first image to the second location in the second image is calculated. The first location is known and the second location (i.e., location of the object in the second image) can be determined based on the warp operation and a difference between the first and third locations (i.e., locations of the object in first image and the warped second image). As a result of the warping operation, the object in the warped second image is closer to the first location, so it is not necessary to search the entire warped second image to identify the object and the third location. Instead, a limited range of pixels surrounding the first location may be searched.

As shown in FIG. **1**B, in one embodiment, the limited range of pixels is a 3×3 pixel region centered at the first location. Importantly, the limited range is less than the full resolution, in pixels, of the first image, where the full resolution is one of the dimensions (e.g., height or width) of the first image. Note that the dimensions of the first image and the warped second image for each level of the feature pyramids are equal. In the context of the following description, the limited range of pixels is applied to a level of the second pyramidal set of features that is warped. The limited range of pixels is centered at a first location corresponding to the first location in the level of the first pyramidal set of features.

FIG. **1**C illustrates a block diagram of an optical flow system **150**, in accordance with one embodiment. The optical flow system **150** includes a pyramidal image feature structure generator **105**, a neural network model **115**, an upsampler **152**, and a context network **145**. The neural network model **115** comprises multiple layers including one or more warping layer(s) **125**, one or more partial cost volume computation layer(s) **135**, and one or more optical flow estimator layer(s) **140**. In one embodiment, the warping layer(s) **125** comprises a single layer, the partial cost volume computation layer(s) **135** comprises a single layer, and the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** comprises a CNN. In one embodiment, the context network **145** is omitted and the optical flow estimate generated by the neural network model **115** is used as the refined optical flow estimate. The context network **145** is configured to post-process an optical flow estimate output by the neural network model **115**, and may perform median filtering, weighted median filtering, and/or bilateral filtering to generate the refined optical flow estimate.

In one embodiment, the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105** is implemented using a neural network, starting with the first and second images at the bottom level and generating each higher level until the top level is reached. The optical flow estimation technique is iterative, starting at a coarse level of detail (top level of the feature pyramid) and finishing at a fine level of detail, as described in detail in conjunction with FIG. **2**A. Conventional techniques first compute two (Gaussian) image pyramids for the first and the second images. In contrast, the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105** is a neural network configured to construct feature pyramids, learning the filters that are used to compute the features from a training dataset. In one embodiment, features are extracted from the first image and the second image at the bottom level by a convolutional layer and then the extracted features are downsampled by another convolutional layer to generate the features for the subsequent level. Thereafter, each level is downsampled by a convolutional layer to generate the features for the level above until the top level is reached. If the convolutional layers were replaced by fixed Gaussian filters, a conventional image pyramid could be generated. FIG. **2**B illustrates one embodiment of the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105**.

In one embodiment, for processing by the neural network model **115**, the top level (l=L), the initial optical flow estimate is initialized to 0 and provided to the warping layer(s) **125** and optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** by the upsampler **152**. Beginning at the top level of the feature pyramids, the features of the second image at the current level are warped using the initial optical flow estimate. For subsequent levels of the feature pyramids, the features of the second image at the current level are warped using the refined optical flow estimate, w^l computed by the optical flow system **150** for the higher pyramid level that is upsampled by the upsampler **152**.

In contrast, conventional techniques using image pyramids use spatial and temporal differences of the two small images at the top levels of the image pyramids to compute the initial optical flow. At the next pyramid level, the optical flow is upsampled from the higher level, and used to warp the second image toward the first image. Spatial and temporal differences are computed for the first image and the warped second image and the differences and the upsampled optical flow are used to compute the new optical flow estimate at the current level. However, the temporal difference computed by the conventional optical flow techniques, only allow small, often subpixel, changes around the up sampled flow.

Instead of computing the temporal difference between the first image and the warped second image, the partial cost volume computation layer(s) **135** computes the correlation between features of the first image and features of the warped second image. The partial cost volume represents the correlation, and, together with the upsampled optical flow estimate provided by the upsampler **152** and features of the first image, the partial cost volume is input to the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** to predict the new optical flow estimates. Computation of the partial cost volume enables changes that are as large as the range of correlation around the unsampled optical flow.

The warping layer(s) **125** warps the features of the second image, c_2^{l-1} toward the first image using the upsampled optical flow from the lth level.

$$c_w^{l-1}(x)=c_2^{l-1}(x+\uparrow w^l(x)), \tag{1}$$

where $\uparrow w^l$ denotes the upsampled and scaled optical flow from the lth level and is zero at the top level. The bilinear interpolation method may be used to implement the warping operation and compute the gradients for the features and optical flow estimates for backpropagation during training of the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105**. For non-translational motion, warping can compensate some geometric distortions and place image patches at the correct scale.

At the lth pyramid level, the partial cost volume computation layer(s) **135** computes the partial cost volume by computing the correlation using features of the first image, c_1^l toward and warped features of the second image, c_w^l:

$$cv^l(x_1, x_2) = \frac{1}{N}(c_1^l(x_1))^T c_w^l(x_2), \tag{2}$$

Where T is the transpose operator and N is the length of the column vector c_1^l (x_1). For a seven level (L=7) feature pyramid, a partial cost volume is computed with a limited range of d pixels, i.e., $|x_1-x_2|_\infty \leq d$. Note that a one-pixel motion at the top level corresponds to 64 (2^6) pixels at the full resolution first and second images. Thus, d can be set to a small value.

To obtain the optical flow estimate w^l at the lth pyramid level, the features of the first image, the partial cost volume, and the upsampled optical flow estimate are input the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140**. In one embodiment, the parameters used by the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** for processing different levels of the feature pyramids are not shared, so separate parameters are used for each level. In one embodiment, within the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140**, the inputs to every convolutional layer are the output of and the input to the previous layer. The optical flow is estimated for each level by the neural network model **115** until the bottom level is reached. In one embodiment, the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** outputs quarter resolution optical flow and bilinear interpolation is used to obtain the full-resolution optical flow estimate. In one embodiment, the context network **145** is omitted and the upsampler **152** receives the optical flow estimate directly from the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140**.

As context is crucial for optical flow estimation, in one embodiment, the context network **145** is employed at the desired pyramid level (i.e., the bottom level), to effectively enlarge the receptive field size of each output unit. In one embodiment, the context network **145** is a feed-forward CNN, that receives the estimated optical flow and features of the second to last layer (f^2) from the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140**, and outputs the refined optical flow estimate.

In one embodiment, the design of the context network **145** is based on dilated convolutions and includes seven convolutional layers. The spatial kernel for each convolutional layer is 3×3 and the layers have different dilation constants. A convolutional layer with a dilation constant k means that an input unit to a filter in the layer are k-unit apart from the other input units to the filter in the layer, both in vertical and horizontal directions. Convolutional layers with large dilation constants enlarge the receptive field of each output unit without incurring a large computational burden. In one embodiment, from bottom to top, the dilation constants are 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 1, and 1.

During training of the optical flow system **150**, the neural network parameters (e.g., weights) for the neural network model **115** and the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105** are learned, as well as the neural network parameters of the context network **145**. Compared with conventional techniques that use energy minimization in place of the partial cost volume computation layer(s) **135** and optical flow estimator layer(s) **140**, the warping, partial cost volume, and layers of the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** within the neural network model **115** are computationally light. Further, the warping layer(s) **125** and partial cost volume computation layer(s) **135** have no learnable parameters, significantly reducing the size of the neural network model **115**.

Assume that Θ is the set of all the learnable parameters in the optical flow system **150** including the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105** and the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** at different pyramid levels. Let w_{Θ}^{l} denote the optical flow field at the lth pyramid level predicted by the neural network model **115**, and w_{GT}^{l} the corresponding supervision signal. A multiscale training loss may be computed:

$$\mathcal{L}(\Theta)=\Sigma_{l=l_0}^{L}\propto_{l}\Sigma_{x}|w_{\Theta}^{l}(x)-w_{GT}^{l}(x)|_2+\gamma|\Theta|_2 \quad (3)$$

where $|w_{\Theta}^{l}(x)-w_{GT}^{l}(x)|_2$ computes the L2 norm of a vector and the second term regularizes parameters of the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105** and the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140**. For fine-tuning, the following robust training loss may be used:

$$\mathcal{L}(\Theta)=\Sigma_{l=l_0}^{L}\propto_{l}\Sigma_{x}(|w_{\Theta}^{l}(x)-w_{GT}^{l}(x)|+\in)^{q}+\gamma|\Theta|_2 \quad (4)$$

Where $|w_{\Theta}^{l}(x)-w_{GT}^{l}(x)|^{q}$ denotes the L1 norm, $q<1$ gives less penalty to outliers, and $\in$ is a small constant.

In one embodiment, the weights in the training loss computation of equation (3) are set to be $\alpha_6=0.32$, $\alpha_5=0.08$, $\alpha_4=0.02$, $\alpha_3=0.01$, and $\alpha_2=0.005$. These settings give higher weights to loss terms at the second and third pyramid levels, accounting for the number of pixels at each level. The ground truth flow may be scaled by 20 and downsampled to obtain the supervision signals at different levels. Note that, in one embodiment, no further scaling of the supervision signal is performed at each level. As a result, the upsampled optical flow estimate is scaled at each pyramid level for input to the warping layer(s) **125**. For example, at the second level, the upsampled flow is scaled from the third level by a factor of 5 (=20/4) before warping features of the second image. The trade-off weight γ is set to be 0.0004. For the partial cost volume computation, the search range d is set to 4 pixels at each level.

FIG. **2**A illustrates a flowchart of a method **200** for estimating optical flow, in accordance with one embodiment. Although method **200** is described in the context of a processing unit, the method **200** may also be performed by a program, custom circuitry, or by a combination of custom circuitry and a program. For example, the method **200** may be executed by a GPU (graphics processing unit), CPU (central processing unit), or any processor capable of implementing a neural network model. Furthermore, persons of ordinary skill in the art will understand that any system that performs method **200** is within the scope and spirit of embodiments of the present invention.

At step **205**, the optical flow estimate provided to the warping layer(s) **125** and the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** is initialized to zero and the feature pyramid level l is set to the top level L. At step **110**, a first pyramidal set of features is generated by the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105** for a first image. At step **210**, a second pyramidal set of features, for a second image, is generated by the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105**. The first and second pyramidal sets of features may be generated in parallel or in series.

At step **215**, the warping layer(s) **125** warps the lth level of the second pyramidal set of features using the upsampled optical flow estimate (or the initialized optical flow estimate when l=L) to generate the warped second image features. At step **220**, the partial cost volume computation layer(s) **135** generates the partial cost volume for the lth level using the lth level of the first pyramidal set of features and the warped second image features (i.e., warped features for the lth level of the second pyramidal set of features). At step **225**, the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** produces an optical flow estimate for the lth level using the partial cost volume for the lth level and the lth level of the first pyramidal set of features. In one embodiment, the context network **145** is omitted and the optical flow estimate produced by the optical flow estimator layer(s) **140** is used as the refined optical flow estimate.

At step **230**, the optical flow system **150** determines if the bottom level of the feature pyramid has been processed, and, if so, the optical flow estimate is final. Otherwise, at step **235**, the upsampler **152** upsamples the optical flow estimate. At step **240**, the optical flow system **150** decrements the level l and returns to step **215** to repeat steps **215** through **225** for another level.

FIG. **2**B illustrates a block diagram **245** of a feature pyramid extraction neural network, in accordance with one embodiment. In one embodiment, the pyramidal image feature structure generator **105** is implemented as the block diagram **245**. Although the block diagram **245** is described in the context of processing units, the block diagram **245** may also be performed by a program, custom circuitry, or by a combination of custom circuitry and a program.

An image is input to a convolutional layer **201** that downsamples the image. In one embodiment, a 3×3×3 convolutional filter is used to perform a 2× downsampling on a 512×512 pixel image. The downsampled image is processed by a convolutional layer **202**. In one embodiment, the convolutional layer **202** performs a 16×3×3 convolution operation on the downsampled image to extract the features c^1. In one embodiment, the image includes 3 channels (e.g., red, green, blue color channels) and the features c^1 includes 16 channels that are each 256×256 pixels.

The features c^1 is input to a convolutional layer **203** that downsamples the features c^1. In one embodiment, a 16×3×3 convolutional filter is used to perform a 2× downsampling on the features c^1. The downsampled features c^1 are processed by a convolutional layer **204**. In one embodiment, the convolutional layer **204** performs a 32×3×3 convolution operation on the downsampled features c^1 to extract the features c^2. In one embodiment, the features c^2 includes 32 channels that are each 128×128 pixels.

The features c^2 is input to a convolutional layer **206** that downsamples the features c^2. In one embodiment, a 32×3×3 convolutional filter is used to perform a 2× downsampling on the features c^2. The downsampled features c^2 are processed by a convolutional layer **207**. In one embodiment, the convolutional layer **207** performs a 64×3×3 convolution operation on the downsampled features c^2 to extract the features c^3. In one embodiment, the features c^3 includes 64 channels that are each 64×64 pixels.

The features c^3 is input to a convolutional layer **208** that downsamples the features c^3. In one embodiment, a 64×3×3 convolutional filter is used to perform a 2× downsampling on the features c^3. The downsampled features c^3 are processed by a convolutional layer **209**. In one embodiment, the convolutional layer **209** performs a 96×3×3 convolution operation on the downsampled features c^3 to extract the features c^4. In one embodiment, the features c^4 includes 96 channels that are each 32×32 pixels.

The features c^4 is input to a convolutional layer **211** that downsamples the features c^4. In one embodiment, a 64×3×3 convolutional filter is used to perform a 2× downsampling on the features c^4. The downsampled features c^4 are processed by a convolutional layer **212**. In one embodiment, the convolutional layer **212** performs a 128×3×3 convolution operation on the downsampled features c^4 to extract the features c^5. In one embodiment, the features c^5 includes 128 channels that are each 16×16 pixels.

The features c^5 is input to a convolutional layer **213** that downsamples the features c^5. In one embodiment, a 128×3×3 convolutional filter is used to perform a 2× downsampling on the features c^5. The downsampled features c^5 are processed by a convolutional layer **214**. In one embodiment, the convolutional layer **214** performs a 192×3×3 convolution operation on the downsampled features c^5 to extract the features c^6. In one embodiment, the features c^6 includes 192 channels that are each 8×8 pixels.

FIG. **2**C illustrates a block diagram **250** of a warping, partial cost volume, and flow estimator neural network, in accordance with one embodiment. In one embodiment, the neural network model **115** comprises the block diagram **250**. Although the block diagram **250** is described in the context of processing units, the block diagram **250** may also be performed by a program, custom circuitry, or by a combination of custom circuitry and a program.

The processing units in the block diagram **250** apply the same operation at each level of the feature pyramid, warping the features of the second image toward the features of the first image using the upsampled optical flow estimate from the lower level, computing the correlation between features of the first image and the warped features of the second image, and then decoding the optical flow at the current level using the correlation and the upsampled flow and features.

In one embodiment the block diagram **250** is configured to estimate the optical flow at level $l=2$ of the feature pyramid. At other levels, the block diagram **250** has the same structure except for the top level, which does not use the upsampled optical flow and instead directly computes the partial cost volume using features of the first and second images.

The warping layer(s) **125** receives the features for the first image at the second level, c_1^2, the features for the second image at the second level, c_2^2, and the upsampled optical flow estimate from the third (previous) level, $\uparrow w^3$. The warping layer(s) **125** generates the warped features for the second image at the second level, c_w^2. In one embodiment, the features for the first and second images at the second level include 32 channels that are each 128×128 pixels, the upsampled optical flow estimate from the third level includes 2 channels of features that are 128×128 pixels, and the warped features for the second image at the second level includes 32 channels that are 128×128 pixels.

The partial cost volume computation layer(s) **135** receives the warped features for the second image at the second level, c_w^2, the features for the first image at the second level, c_1^2, and the upsampled optical flow estimate from the third (previous) level, $\uparrow w^3$. The partial cost volume computation layer(s) **135** computes the partial cost volume at the second level, cv^2. In one embodiment, the partial cost volume at the second level includes 81 channels of 128×128 pixels.

The partial cost volume at the second level and the features of the first image at the second level are input to a sequence of convolutional layers including a convolutional layer **221**, a convolutional layer **222**, a convolutional layer **223**, a convolutional layer **224**, a convolutional layer **226**, and a convolutional layer **227** to produce an optical flow estimate for the second layer, w^2. In one embodiment, the convolutional layers **221**, **222**, **223**, **224**, **226**, and **227** are configured to perform convolutional operations of 115×3×3 for 128 channels, 128×3×3 for 128 channels, 128×3×3 for 96 channels, 96×3×3 for 64 channels, 64×3×3 for 32 channels, and 32×3×3 for 2 channels, respectively to produce the optical flow estimate for the second layer having 2 channels of 128×128 pixels. The output of the next to last convolution layer **226**, f^2 is provided as an input to the context network **145**.

FIG. **2**D illustrates a block diagram **255** of a context network, in accordance with one embodiment. In one embodiment, the context network **145** comprises the block diagram **255**. Although the block diagram **255** is described in the context of processing units, the block diagram **255** may also be performed by a program, custom circuitry, or by a combination of custom circuitry and a program.

In one embodiment, the context network **145** includes a sequence of convolutional layers including a convolutional layer **228**, a convolutional layer **229**, a convolutional layer **231**, a convolutional layer **232**, a convolutional layer **233**, a convolutional layer **234**, and a convolutional layer **236** to produce an incremental optical flow estimate for the second level, δw^2. The incremental optical flow estimate for the second level is summed with the optical flow estimate for the second level to produce a refined optical flow estimate for the second layer, $\hat{w}^2$. In one embodiment, the spatial kernel for each convolutional layer is 3×3 and the convolutional layers have different dilation constants.

In one embodiment, the convolutional layers **228**, **229**, **231**, **232**, **233**, **234**, and **236** are configured to perform convolutional operations of 34×3×3, 128×3×3, 128×3×3, 128×3×3, 96×3×3, 64×3×3, and 32×3×3, respectively to produce the refined optical flow estimate for the second layer having 2 channels of 128×128 pixels.

The optical flow system **150** uses the optical flow estimate for the previously processed feature pyramid layer to warp the features of the second image. The warped features and features of the first image are then used to construct the partial cost volume, which is processed to estimate the optical flow. The use of feature pyramid structures instead of image pyramid structures combined with computation of a partial cost volume provides advantages of increased accuracy, reduce model size, and reduced execution time for the optical flow system **150**. While constructing the full cost volume has been thought to be computationally prohibitive for real-time optical flow estimation, computation of the partial cost volume limiting the search range to a small number of pixels at each feature pyramid level. The warping layer(s) **125** links different levels of the feature pyramids and enables the estimation of large motion.

Parallel Processing Architecture

FIG. **3** illustrates a parallel processing unit (PPU) **300**, in accordance with one embodiment. In one embodiment, the PPU **300** is a multi-threaded processor that is implemented on one or more integrated circuit devices. The PPU **300** is a latency hiding architecture designed to process many threads in parallel. A thread (i.e., a thread of execution) is an instantiation of a set of instructions configured to be executed by the PPU **300**. In one embodiment, the PPU **300** is a graphics processing unit (GPU) configured to implement a graphics rendering pipeline for processing three-dimensional (3D) graphics data in order to generate two-dimensional (2D) image data for display on a display device such as a liquid crystal display (LCD) device. In other embodiments, the PPU **300** may be utilized for performing general-purpose computations. While one exemplary parallel processor is provided herein for illustrative purposes, it should be strongly noted that such processor is set forth for illustrative purposes only, and that any processor may be employed to supplement and/or substitute for the same.

One or more PPUs **300** may be configured to accelerate thousands of High Performance Computing (HPC), data center, and machine learning applications. The PPU **300** may be configured to accelerate numerous deep learning systems and applications including autonomous vehicle platforms, deep learning, high-accuracy speech, image, and text recognition systems, intelligent video analytics, molecular simulations, drug discovery, disease diagnosis, weather forecasting, big data analytics, astronomy, molecular dynamics simulation, financial modeling, robotics, factory automation, real-time language translation, online search optimizations, and personalized user recommendations, and the like.

As shown in FIG. **3**, the PPU **300** includes an Input/Output (I/O) unit **305**, a front end unit **315**, a scheduler unit **320**, a work distribution unit **325**, a hub **330**, a crossbar (Xbar) **370**, one or more general processing clusters (GPCs) **350**, and one or more partition units **380**. The PPU **300** may be connected to a host processor or other PPUs **300** via one or more high-speed NVLink **310** interconnect. The PPU **300** may be connected to a host processor or other peripheral devices via an interconnect **302**. The PPU **300** may also be connected to a local memory comprising a number of memory devices **304**. In one embodiment, the local memory may comprise a number of dynamic random access memory (DRAM) devices. The DRAM devices may be configured as a high-bandwidth memory (HBM) subsystem, with multiple DRAM dies stacked within each device.

The NVLink **310** interconnect enables systems to scale and include one or more PPUs **300** combined with one or more CPUs, supports cache coherence between the PPUs **300** and CPUs, and CPU mastering. Data and/or commands may be transmitted by the NVLink **310** through the hub **330** to/from other units of the PPU **300** such as one or more copy engines, a video encoder, a video decoder, a power management unit, etc. (not explicitly shown). The NVLink **310** is described in more detail in conjunction with FIG. **5**B.

The I/O unit **305** is configured to transmit and receive communications (i.e., commands, data, etc.) from a host processor (not shown) over the interconnect **302**. The I/O unit **305** may communicate with the host processor directly via the interconnect **302** or through one or more intermediate devices such as a memory bridge. In one embodiment, the I/O unit **305** may communicate with one or more other processors, such as one or more the PPUs **300** via the interconnect **302**. In one embodiment, the I/O unit **305** implements a Peripheral Component Interconnect Express (PCIe) interface for communications over a PCIe bus and the interconnect **302** is a PCIe bus. In alternative embodiments, the I/O unit **305** may implement other types of well-known interfaces for communicating with external devices.

The I/O unit **305** decodes packets received via the interconnect **302**. In one embodiment, the packets represent commands configured to cause the PPU **300** to perform various operations. The I/O unit **305** transmits the decoded commands to various other units of the PPU **300** as the commands may specify. For example, some commands may be transmitted to the front end unit **315**. Other commands may be transmitted to the hub **330** or other units of the PPU **300** such as one or more copy engines, a video encoder, a video decoder, a power management unit, etc. (not explicitly shown). In other words, the I/O unit **305** is configured to route communications between and among the various logical units of the PPU **300**.

In one embodiment, a program executed by the host processor encodes a command stream in a buffer that provides workloads to the PPU **300** for processing. A workload may comprise several instructions and data to be processed by those instructions. The buffer is a region in a memory that is accessible (i.e., read/write) by both the host processor and the PPU **300**. For example, the host interface unit **310** may be configured to access the buffer in a system memory connected to the interconnect **302** via memory requests transmitted over the interconnect **302** by the I/O unit **305**. In one embodiment, the host processor writes the command stream to the buffer and then transmits a pointer to the start of the command stream to the PPU **300**. The front end unit **315** receives pointers to one or more command streams. The front end unit **315** manages the one or more streams, reading commands from the streams and forwarding commands to the various units of the PPU **300**.

The front end unit **315** is coupled to a scheduler unit **320** that configures the various GPCs **350** to process tasks defined by the one or more streams. The scheduler unit **320** is configured to track state information related to the various tasks managed by the scheduler unit **320**. The state may indicate which GPC **350** a task is assigned to, whether the task is active or inactive, a priority level associated with the task, and so forth. The scheduler unit **320** manages the execution of a plurality of tasks on the one or more GPCs **350**.

The scheduler unit **320** is coupled to a work distribution unit **325** that is configured to dispatch tasks for execution on the GPCs **350**. The work distribution unit **325** may track a number of scheduled tasks received from the scheduler unit **320**. In one embodiment, the work distribution unit **325** manages a pending task pool and an active task pool for each of the GPCs **350**. The pending task pool may comprise a number of slots (e.g., 32 slots) that contain tasks assigned to be processed by a particular GPC **350**. The active task pool may comprise a number of slots (e.g., 4 slots) for tasks that are actively being processed by the GPCs **350**. As a GPC **350** finishes the execution of a task, that task is evicted from the active task pool for the GPC **350** and one of the other tasks from the pending task pool is selected and scheduled for execution on the GPC **350**. If an active task has been idle on the GPC **350**, such as while waiting for a data dependency to be resolved, then the active task may be evicted from the GPC **350** and returned to the pending task pool while another task in the pending task pool is selected and scheduled for execution on the GPC **350**.

The work distribution unit **325** communicates with the one or more GPCs **350** via XBar **370**. The XBar **370** is an interconnect network that couples many of the units of the PPU **300** to other units of the PPU **300**. For example, the XBar **370** may be configured to couple the work distribution unit **325** to a particular GPC **350**. Although not shown explicitly, one or more other units of the PPU **300** may also be connected to the XBar **370** via the hub **330**.

The tasks are managed by the scheduler unit **320** and dispatched to a GPC **350** by the work distribution unit **325**. The GPC **350** is configured to process the task and generate results. The results may be consumed by other tasks within the GPC **350**, routed to a different GPC **350** via the XBar **370**, or stored in the memory **304**. The results can be written to the memory **304** via the partition units **380**, which implement a memory interface for reading and writing data to/from the memory **304**. The results can be transmitted to another PPU **304** or CPU via the NVLink **310**. In one embodiment, the PPU **300** includes a number U of partition units **380** that is equal to the number of separate and distinct memory devices **304** coupled to the PPU **300**. A partition unit **380** will be described in more detail below in conjunction with FIG. **4**B.

In one embodiment, a host processor executes a driver kernel that implements an application programming interface (API) that enables one or more applications executing on the host processor to schedule operations for execution on the PPU **300**. In one embodiment, multiple compute applications are simultaneously executed by the PPU **300** and the PPU **300** provides isolation, quality of service (QoS), and independent address spaces for the multiple compute applications. An application may generate instructions (i.e., API calls) that cause the driver kernel to generate one or more tasks for execution by the PPU **300**. The driver kernel outputs tasks to one or more streams being processed by the PPU **300**. Each task may comprise one or more groups of related threads, referred to herein as a warp. In one embodiment, a warp comprises 32 related threads that may be executed in parallel. Cooperating threads may refer to a plurality of threads including instructions to perform the task and that may exchange data through shared memory. Threads and cooperating threads are described in more detail in conjunction with FIG. **5**A.

FIG. **4**A illustrates a GPC **350** of the PPU **300** of FIG. **3**, in accordance with one embodiment. As shown in FIG. **4**A, each GPC **350** includes a number of hardware units for processing tasks. In one embodiment, each GPC **350** includes a pipeline manager **410**, a pre-raster operations unit (PROP) **415**, a raster engine **425**, a work distribution crossbar (WDX) **480**, a memory management unit (MMU) **490**, and one or more Data Processing Clusters (DPCs) **420**. It will be appreciated that the GPC **350** of FIG. **4**A may include other hardware units in lieu of or in addition to the units shown in FIG. **4**A.

In one embodiment, the operation of the GPC **350** is controlled by the pipeline manager **410**. The pipeline manager **410** manages the configuration of the one or more DPCs **420** for processing tasks allocated to the GPC **350**. In one embodiment, the pipeline manager **410** may configure at least one of the one or more DPCs **420** to implement at least a portion of a graphics rendering pipeline. For example, a DPC **420** may be configured to execute a vertex shader program on the programmable streaming multiprocessor (SM) **440**. The pipeline manager **410** may also be configured to route packets received from the work distribution unit **325** to the appropriate logical units within the GPC **350**. For example, some packets may be routed to fixed function hardware units in the PROP **415** and/or raster engine **425** while other packets may be routed to the DPCs **420** for processing by the primitive engine **435** or the SM **440**. In one embodiment, the pipeline manager **410** may configure at least one of the one or more DPCs **420** to implement a neural network model and/or a computing pipeline.

The PROP unit **415** is configured to route data generated by the raster engine **425** and the DPCs **420** to a Raster Operations (ROP) unit in the partition unit **380**, described in more detail in conjunction with FIG. **4**B. The PROP unit **415** may also be configured to perform optimizations for color blending, organize pixel data, perform address translations, and the like.

The raster engine **425** includes a number of fixed function hardware units configured to perform various raster operations. In one embodiment, the raster engine **425** includes a setup engine, a coarse raster engine, a culling engine, a clipping engine, a fine raster engine, and a tile coalescing engine. The setup engine receives transformed vertices and generates plane equations associated with the geometric primitive defined by the vertices. The plane equations are transmitted to the coarse raster engine to generate coverage information (e.g., an x,y coverage mask for a tile) for the primitive. The output of the coarse raster engine is transmitted to the culling engine where fragments associated with the primitive that fail a z-test are culled, and transmitted to a clipping engine where fragments lying outside a viewing frustum are clipped. Those fragments that survive clipping and culling may be passed to the fine raster engine to generate attributes for the pixel fragments based on the plane equations generated by the setup engine. The output of the raster engine **425** comprises fragments to be processed, for example, by a fragment shader implemented within a DPC **420**.

Each DPC **420** included in the GPC **350** includes an M-Pipe Controller (MPC) **430**, a primitive engine **435**, and one or more SMs **440**. The MPC **430** controls the operation of the DPC **420**, routing packets received from the pipeline manager **410** to the appropriate units in the DPC **420**. For example, packets associated with a vertex may be routed to the primitive engine **435**, which is configured to fetch vertex attributes associated with the vertex from the memory **304**. In contrast, packets associated with a shader program may be transmitted to the SM **440**.

The SM **440** comprises a programmable streaming processor that is configured to process tasks represented by a number of threads. Each SM **440** is multi-threaded and configured to execute a plurality of threads (e.g., 32 threads) from a particular group of threads concurrently. In one embodiment, the SM **440** implements a SIMD (Single-Instruction, Multiple-Data) architecture where each thread in a group of threads (i.e., a warp) is configured to process a different set of data based on the same set of instructions. All threads in the group of threads execute the same instructions. In another embodiment, the SM **440** implements a SIMT (Single-Instruction, Multiple Thread) architecture where each thread in a group of threads is configured to process a different set of data based on the same set of instructions, but where individual threads in the group of threads are allowed to diverge during execution. In one embodiment, a program counter, call stack, and execution state is maintained for each warp, enabling concurrency between warps and serial execution within warps when threads within the warp diverge. In another embodiment, a program counter, call stack, and execution state is maintained for each individual thread, enabling equal concurrency between all threads, within and between warps. When execution state is maintained for each individual thread, threads executing the same instructions may be converged and executed in parallel for maximum efficiency. The SM **440** will be described in more detail below in conjunction with FIG. **5**A.

The MMU **490** provides an interface between the GPC **350** and the partition unit **380**. The MMU **490** may provide translation of virtual addresses into physical addresses, memory protection, and arbitration of memory requests. In one embodiment, the MMU **490** provides one or more translation lookaside buffers (TLBs) for performing translation of virtual addresses into physical addresses in the memory **304**.

FIG. **4**B illustrates a memory partition unit **380** of the PPU **300** of FIG. **3**, in accordance with one embodiment. As shown in FIG. **4**B, the memory partition unit **380** includes a Raster Operations (ROP) unit **450**, a level two (L2) cache **460**, and a memory interface **470**. The memory interface **470** is coupled to the memory **304**. Memory interface **470** may implement 32, 64, 128, 1024-bit data buses, or the like, for high-speed data transfer. In one embodiment, the PPU **300** incorporates U memory interfaces **470**, one memory interface **470** per pair of partition units **380**, where each pair of partition units **380** is connected to a corresponding memory device **304**. For example, PPU **300** may be connected to up to Y memory devices **304**, such as high bandwidth memory stacks or graphics double-data-rate, version 5, synchronous dynamic random access memory (GDDR5 SDRAM).

In one embodiment, the memory interface **470** implements an HBM2 memory interface and Y equals half U. In one embodiment, the HBM2 memory stacks are located on the same physical package as the PPU **300**, providing substantial power and area savings compared with conventional GDDR5 SDRAM systems. In one embodiment, each HBM2 stack includes four memory dies and Y equals 4, with HBM2 stack including two 128-bit channels per die for a total of 8 channels and a data bus width of 1024 bits.

In one embodiment, the memory **304** supports Single-Error Correcting Double-Error Detecting (SECDED) Error Correction Code (ECC) to protect data. ECC provides higher reliability for compute applications that are sensitive to data corruption. Reliability is especially important in large-scale cluster computing environments where PPUs **300** process very large datasets and/or run applications for extended periods.

In one embodiment, the PPU **300** implements a multi-level memory hierarchy. In one embodiment, the memory partition unit **380** supports a unified memory to provide a single unified virtual address space for CPU and PPU **300** memory, enabling data sharing between virtual memory systems. In one embodiment the frequency of accesses by a PPU **300** to memory located on other processors is traced to ensure that memory pages are moved to the physical memory of the PPU **300** that is accessing the pages more frequently. In one embodiment, the NVLink **310** supports address translation services allowing the PPU **300** to directly access a CPU's page tables and providing full access to CPU memory by the PPU **300**.

In one embodiment, copy engines transfer data between multiple PPUs **300** or between PPUs **300** and CPUs. The copy engines can generate page faults for addresses that are not mapped into the page tables. The memory partition unit **380** can then service the page faults, mapping the addresses into the page table, after which the copy engine can perform the transfer. In a conventional system, memory is pinned (i.e., non-pageable) for multiple copy engine operations between multiple processors, substantially reducing the available memory. With hardware page faulting, addresses can be passed to the copy engines without worrying if the memory pages are resident, and the copy process is transparent.

Data from the memory **304** or other system memory may be fetched by the memory partition unit **380** and stored in the L2 cache **460**, which is located on-chip and is shared between the various GPCs **350**. As shown, each memory partition unit **380** includes a portion of the L2 cache **460** associated with a corresponding memory device **304**. Lower level caches may then be implemented in various units within the GPCs **350**. For example, each of the SMs **440** may implement a level one (L1) cache. The L1 cache is private memory that is dedicated to a particular SM **440**. Data from the L2 cache **460** may be fetched and stored in each of the L1 caches for processing in the functional units of the SMs **440**. The L2 cache **460** is coupled to the memory interface **470** and the XBar **370**.

The ROP unit **450** performs graphics raster operations related to pixel color, such as color compression, pixel blending, and the like. The ROP unit **450** also implements depth testing in conjunction with the raster engine **425**, receiving a depth for a sample location associated with a pixel fragment from the culling engine of the raster engine **425**. The depth is tested against a corresponding depth in a depth buffer for a sample location associated with the fragment. If the fragment passes the depth test for the sample location, then the ROP unit **450** updates the depth buffer and transmits a result of the depth test to the raster engine **425**. It will be appreciated that the number of partition units **380** may be different than the number of GPCs **350** and, therefore, each ROP unit **450** may be coupled to each of the GPCs **350**. The ROP unit **450** tracks packets received from the different GPCs **350** and determines which GPC **350** that a result generated by the ROP unit **450** is routed to through the Xbar **370**.

FIG. **5**A illustrates the streaming multi-processor **440** of FIG. **4**A, in accordance with one embodiment. As shown in FIG. **5**A, the SM **440** includes an instruction cache **505**, one or more scheduler units **510**, a register file **520**, one or more processing cores **550**, one or more special function units (SFUs) **552**, one or more load/store units (LSUs) **554**, an interconnect network **580**, a shared memory/L1 cache **570**.

As described above, the work distribution unit **325** dispatches tasks for execution on the GPCs **350** of the PPU **300**. The tasks are allocated to a particular DPC **420** within a GPC **350** and, if the task is associated with a shader program, the task may be allocated to an SM **440**. The scheduler unit **510** receives the tasks from the work distribution unit **325** and manages instruction scheduling for one or more thread blocks assigned to the SM **440**. The scheduler unit **510** schedules thread blocks for execution as warps of parallel threads, where each thread block is allocated at least one warp. In one embodiment, each warp executes 32 threads. The scheduler unit **510** may manage a plurality of different thread blocks, allocating the warps to the different thread blocks and then dispatching instructions from the plurality of different cooperative groups to the various functional units (i.e., cores **550**, SFUs **552**, and LSUs **554**) during each clock cycle.

Cooperative Groups is a programming model for organizing groups of communicating threads that allows developers to express the granularity at which threads are communicating, enabling the expression of richer, more efficient parallel decompositions. Cooperative launch APIs support synchronization amongst thread blocks for the execution of parallel algorithms. Conventional programming models provide a single, simple construct for synchronizing cooperating threads: a barrier across all threads of a thread block (i.e., the syncthreads( ) function). However, programmers would often like to define groups of threads at smaller than thread block granularities and synchronize within the defined groups to enable greater performance, design flexibility, and software reuse in the form of collective group-wide function interfaces.

Cooperative Groups enables programmers to define groups of threads explicitly at sub-block (i.e., as small as a single thread) and multi-block granularities, and to perform collective operations such as synchronization on the threads in a cooperative group. The programming model supports clean composition across software boundaries, so that libraries and utility functions can synchronize safely within their local context without having to make assumptions about convergence. Cooperative Groups primitives enable new patterns of cooperative parallelism, including producer-consumer parallelism, opportunistic parallelism, and global synchronization across an entire grid of thread blocks.

A dispatch unit **515** is configured to transmit instructions to one or more of the functional units. In the embodiment, the scheduler unit **510** includes two dispatch units **515** that enable two different instructions from the same warp to be dispatched during each clock cycle. In alternative embodiments, each scheduler unit **510** may include a single dispatch unit **515** or additional dispatch units **515**.

Each SM **440** includes a register file **520** that provides a set of registers for the functional units of the SM **440**. In one embodiment, the register file **520** is divided between each of the functional units such that each functional unit is allocated a dedicated portion of the register file **520**. In another embodiment, the register file **520** is divided between the different warps being executed by the SM **440**. The register file **520** provides temporary storage for operands connected to the data paths of the functional units.

Each SM **440** comprises L processing cores **550**. In one embodiment, the SM **440** includes a large number (e.g., 128, etc.) of distinct processing cores **550**. Each core **550** may include a fully-pipelined, single-precision, double-precision, and/or mixed precision processing unit that includes a floating point arithmetic logic unit and an integer arithmetic logic unit. In one embodiment, the floating point arithmetic logic units implement the IEEE 754-2008 standard for floating point arithmetic. In one embodiment, the cores **550** include 64 single-precision (32-bit) floating point cores, 64 integer cores, 32 double-precision (64-bit) floating point cores, and 8 tensor cores.

Tensor cores configured to perform matrix operations, and, in one embodiment, one or more tensor cores are included in the cores **550**. In particular, the tensor cores are configured to perform deep learning matrix arithmetic, such as convolution operations for neural network training and inferencing. In one embodiment, each tensor core operates on a 4×4 matrix and performs a matrix multiply and accumulate operation D=A×B+C, where A, B, C, and D are 4×4 matrices.

In one embodiment, the matrix multiply inputs A and B are 16-bit floating point matrices, while the accumulation matrices C and D may be 16-bit floating point or 32-bit floating point matrices. Tensor Cores operate on 16-bit floating point input data with 32-bit floating point accumulation. The 16-bit floating point multiply requires 64 operations and results in a full precision product that is then accumulated using 32-bit floating point addition with the other intermediate products for a 4×4×4 matrix multiply. In practice, Tensor Cores are used to perform much larger two-dimensional or higher dimensional matrix operations, built up from these smaller elements. An API, such as CUDA 9 C++ API, exposes specialized matrix load, matrix multiply and accumulate, and matrix store operations to efficiently use Tensor Cores from a CUDA-C++ program. At the CUDA level, the warp-level interface assumes 16×16 size matrices spanning all 32 threads of the warp.

Each SM **440** also comprises M SFUs **552** that perform special functions (e.g., attribute evaluation, reciprocal square root, and the like). In one embodiment, the SFUs **552** may include a tree traversal unit configured to traverse a hierarchical tree data structure. In one embodiment, the SFUs **552** may include texture unit configured to perform texture map filtering operations. In one embodiment, the texture units are configured to load texture maps (e.g., a 2D array of texels) from the memory **304** and sample the texture maps to produce sampled texture values for use in shader programs executed by the SM **440**. In one embodiment, the texture maps are stored in the shared memory/L1 cache **470**. The texture units implement texture operations such as filtering operations using mip-maps (i.e., texture maps of varying levels of detail). In one embodiment, each SM **340** includes two texture units.

Each SM **440** also comprises N LSUs **554** that implement load and store operations between the shared memory/L1 cache **570** and the register file **520**. Each SM **440** includes an interconnect network **580** that connects each of the functional units to the register file **520** and the LSU **554** to the register file **520**, shared memory/L1 cache **570**. In one embodiment, the interconnect network **580** is a crossbar that can be configured to connect any of the functional units to any of the registers in the register file **520** and connect the LSUs **554** to the register file and memory locations in shared memory/L1 cache **570**.

The shared memory/L1 cache **570** is an array of on-chip memory that allows for data storage and communication between the SM **440** and the primitive engine **435** and between threads in the SM **440**. In one embodiment, the shared memory/L1 cache **570** comprises 128 KB of storage capacity and is in the path from the SM **440** to the partition unit **380**. The shared memory/L1 cache **570** can be used to cache reads and writes. One or more of the shared memory/L1 cache **570**, L2 cache **460**, and memory **304** are backing stores.

Combining data cache and shared memory functionality into a single memory block provides the best overall performance for both types of memory accesses. The capacity is usable as a cache by programs that do not use shared memory. For example, if shared memory is configured to use half of the capacity, texture and load/store operations can use the remaining capacity. Integration within the shared memory/L1 cache **570** enables the shared memory/L1 cache **570** to function as a high-throughput conduit for streaming data while simultaneously providing high-bandwidth and low-latency access to frequently reused data.

When configured for general purpose parallel computation, a simpler configuration can be used compared with graphics processing. Specifically, the fixed function graphics processing units shown in FIG. **3**, are bypassed, creating a much simpler programming model. In the general purpose parallel computation configuration, the work distribution unit **325** assigns and distributes blocks of threads directly to the DPCs **420**. The threads in a block execute the same program, using a unique thread ID in the calculation to ensure each thread generates unique results, using the SM **440** to execute the program and perform calculations, shared memory/L1 cache **570** to communicate between threads, and the LSU **554** to read and write global memory through the shared memory/L1 cache **570** and the memory partition unit **380**. When configured for general purpose parallel computation, the SM **440** can also write commands that the scheduler unit **320** can use to launch new work on the DPCs **420**.

The PPU **300** may be included in a desktop computer, a laptop computer, a tablet computer, servers, supercomputers, a smart-phone (e.g., a wireless, hand-held device), personal digital assistant (PDA), a digital camera, a vehicle, a head mounted display, a hand-held electronic device, and the like. In one embodiment, the PPU **300** is embodied on a single semiconductor substrate. In another embodiment, the PPU **300** is included in a system-on-a-chip (SoC) along with one or more other devices such as additional PPUs **300**, the memory **204**, a reduced instruction set computer (RISC) CPU, a memory management unit (MMU), a digital-to-analog converter (DAC), and the like.

In one embodiment, the PPU **300** may be included on a graphics card that includes one or more memory devices **304**. The graphics card may be configured to interface with a PCIe slot on a motherboard of a desktop computer. In yet another embodiment, the PPU **300** may be an integrated graphics processing unit (iGPU) or parallel processor included in the chipset of the motherboard.

Machine Learning

Deep neural networks (DNNs) developed on processors, such as the PPU **300** have been used for diverse use cases, from self-driving cars to faster drug development, from automatic image captioning in online image databases to smart real-time language translation in video chat applications. In one embodiment, the PPU **300** may be configured to implement the optical flow system **150**. Deep learning is a technique that models the neural learning process of the human brain, continually learning, continually getting smarter, and delivering more accurate results more quickly over time. A child is initially taught by an adult to correctly identify and classify various shapes, eventually being able to identify shapes without any coaching. Similarly, a deep learning or neural learning system needs to be trained in object recognition and classification for it get smarter and more efficient at identifying basic objects, occluded objects, etc., while also assigning context to objects.

At the simplest level, neurons in the human brain look at various inputs that are received, importance levels are assigned to each of these inputs, and output is passed on to other neurons to act upon. An artificial neuron or perceptron is the most basic model of a neural network. In one example, a perceptron may receive one or more inputs that represent various features of an object that the perceptron is being trained to recognize and classify, and each of these features is assigned a certain weight based on the importance of that feature in defining the shape of an object.

A deep neural network (DNN) model includes multiple layers of many connected perceptrons (e.g., nodes) that can be trained with enormous amounts of input data to quickly solve complex problems with high accuracy. In one example, a first layer of the DLL model breaks down an input image of an automobile into various sections and looks for basic patterns such as lines and angles. The second layer assembles the lines to look for higher level patterns such as wheels, windshields, and mirrors. The next layer identifies the type of vehicle, and the final few layers generate a label for the input image, identifying the model of a specific automobile brand.

Once the DNN is trained, the DNN can be deployed and used to identify and classify objects or patterns in a process known as inference. Examples of inference (the process through which a DNN extracts useful information from a given input) include identifying handwritten numbers on checks deposited into ATM machines, identifying images of friends in photos, delivering movie recommendations to over fifty million users, identifying and classifying different types of automobiles, pedestrians, and road hazards in driverless cars, or translating human speech in real-time.

During training, data flows through the DNN in a forward propagation phase until a prediction is produced that indicates a label corresponding to the input. If the neural network does not correctly label the input, then errors between the correct label and the predicted label are analyzed, and the weights are adjusted for each feature during a backward propagation phase until the DNN correctly labels the input and other inputs in a training dataset. Training complex neural networks requires massive amounts of parallel computing performance, including floating-point multiplications and additions that are supported by the PPU **300**. Inferencing is less compute-intensive than training, being a latency-sensitive process where a trained neural network is applied to new inputs it has not seen before to classify images, translate speech, and generally infer new information.

Neural networks rely heavily on matrix math operations, and complex multi-layered networks require tremendous amounts of floating-point performance and bandwidth for both efficiency and speed. With thousands of processing cores, optimized for matrix math operations, and delivering tens to hundreds of TFLOPS of performance, the PPU **300** is a computing platform capable of delivering performance required for deep neural network-based artificial intelligence and machine learning applications.

Exemplary Computing System

Systems with multiple GPUs and CPUs are used in a variety of industries as developers expose and leverage more parallelism in applications such as artificial intelligence computing. High-performance GPU-accelerated systems with tens to many thousands of compute nodes are deployed in data centers, research facilities, and supercomputers to solve ever larger problems. As the number of processing devices within the high-performance systems increases, the communication and data transfer mechanisms need to scale to support the increased bandwidth.

FIG. **5**B is a conceptual diagram of a processing system **500** implemented using the PPU **300** of FIG. **3**, in accordance with one embodiment. The exemplary system **565** may be configured to implement the method **100** shown in FIG. **1**A and/or the method shown in FIG. **2**A. The processing system **500** includes a CPU **530**, switch **510**, and multiple PPUs **300** each and respective memories **304**. The NVLink **310** provides high-speed communication links between each of the PPUs **300**. The switch **510** interfaces between the interconnect **302** and the CPU **530**. The PPUs **300**, memories **304**, and NVLinks **310** may be situated on a single semiconductor platform to form a parallel processing module **525**.

In the context of the present description, a single semiconductor platform may refer to a sole unitary semiconductor-based integrated circuit fabricated on a die or chip. It should be noted that the term single semiconductor platform may also refer to multi-chip modules with increased connectivity which simulate on-chip operation and make substantial improvements over utilizing a conventional bus implementation. Of course, the various circuits or devices may also be situated separately or in various combinations of semiconductor platforms per the desires of the user. Alternately, the parallel processing module **525** may be implemented as a circuit board substrate and each of the PPUs **300** and/or memories **304** may be packaged devices. In one embodiment, the CPU **530**, switch **510**, and the parallel processing module **525** are situated on a single semiconductor platform.

In one embodiment, the signaling rate of each NVLink **310** is 20 to 25 Gigabits/second and each PPU **300** includes six NVLink **310** interfaces (as shown in FIG. **5**B, five NVLink **310** interfaces are included for each PPU **300**). Each NVLink **310** provides a data transfer rate of 25 Gigabytes/second in each direction, with six links providing 300 Gigabytes/second. The NVLinks **310** can be used exclusively for PPU-to-PPU communication as shown in FIG. **5**B, or some combination of PPU-to-PPU and PPU-to-CPU, when the CPU **530** also includes one or more NVLink **310** interfaces.

In one embodiment, the NVLink **310** allows direct load/store/atomic access from the CPU **530** to each PPU's **300** memory **304**. In one embodiment, the NVLink **310** supports coherency operations, allowing data read from the memories **304** to be stored in the cache hierarchy of the CPU **530**, reducing cache access latency for the CPU **530**. In one embodiment, the NVLink **310** includes support for Address Translation Services (ATS), allowing the PPU **300** to directly access page tables within the CPU **530**. One or more of the NVLinks **310** may also be configured to operate in a low-power mode.

FIG. **5**C illustrates an exemplary system **565** in which the various architecture and/or functionality of the various previous embodiments may be implemented. The exemplary system **565** may be configured to implement the method **100** shown in FIG. **1**A and/or the method **200** shown in FIG. **2**A.

As shown, a system **565** is provided including at least one central processing unit **530** that is connected to a communication bus **575**. The communication bus **575** may be implemented using any suitable protocol, such as PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect), PCI-Express, AGP (Accelerated Graphics Port), HyperTransport, or any other bus or point-to-point communication protocol(s). The system **565** also includes a main memory **540**. Control logic (software) and data are stored in the main memory **540** which may take the form of random access memory (RAM).

The system **565** also includes input devices **560**, the parallel processing system **525**, and display devices **545**, i.e. a conventional CRT (cathode ray tube), LCD (liquid crystal display), LED (light emitting diode), plasma display or the like. User input may be received from the input devices **560**, e.g., keyboard, mouse, touchpad, microphone, and the like. Each of the foregoing modules and/or devices may even be situated on a single semiconductor platform to form the system **565**. Alternately, the various modules may also be situated separately or in various combinations of semiconductor platforms per the desires of the user.

Further, the system **565** may be coupled to a network (e.g., a telecommunications network, local area network (LAN), wireless network, wide area network (WAN) such as the Internet, peer-to-peer network, cable network, or the like) through a network interface **535** for communication purposes.

The system **565** may also include a secondary storage (not shown). The secondary storage **610** includes, for example, a hard disk drive and/or a removable storage drive, representing a floppy disk drive, a magnetic tape drive, a compact disk drive, digital versatile disk (DVD) drive, recording device, universal serial bus (USB) flash memory. The removable storage drive reads from and/or writes to a removable storage unit in a well-known manner.

Computer programs, or computer control logic algorithms, may be stored in the main memory **540** and/or the secondary storage. Such computer programs, when executed, enable the system **565** to perform various functions. The memory **540**, the storage, and/or any other storage are possible examples of computer-readable media.

The architecture and/or functionality of the various previous figures may be implemented in the context of a general computer system, a circuit board system, a game console system dedicated for entertainment purposes, an application-specific system, and/or any other desired system. For example, the system **565** may take the form of a desktop computer, a laptop computer, a tablet computer, servers, supercomputers, a smart-phone (e.g., a wireless, hand-held device), personal digital assistant (PDA), a digital camera, a vehicle, a head mounted display, a hand-held electronic device, a mobile phone device, a television, workstation, game consoles, embedded system, and/or any other type of logic.

While various embodiments have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only, and not limitation. Thus, the breadth and scope of a preferred embodiment should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method, comprising:

generating a first pyramidal set of features for a first image;

computing, by a neural network, a partial cost volume for a level of the first pyramidal set of features using features at the level of the first pyramidal set of features and warped features extracted from a second image, wherein the partial cost volume is computed across a limited range of pixels that is less than a full resolution of the first image, in pixels, at the level; and

processing, by the neural network, the features and the partial cost volume to produce an optical flow estimate for the first image and the second image.

2. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, wherein the features extracted from the second image are included in a second pyramidal set of features extracted from the second image.

3. The computer-implemented method of claim **2**, wherein the features extracted from the second image for the level of the second pyramidal set of images are warped toward the features extracted from the first image using an optical flow estimate for a second level of the first pyramidal set of images to produce the warped features.

4. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, further comprising:

convolving the first image with overlapping filters to extract the features for a first level of the first pyramidal set of features;

convolving the first level with additional filters to extract the features for a subsequent level of the first pyramidal set of features; and

the convolving the subsequent level with additional filters to extract the features for another subsequent level of the first pyramidal set of features until a last level of the first pyramidal set of features is generated.

5. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, wherein a single layer of the neural network generates the warped features.

6. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, wherein the neural network is a convolutional neural network.

7. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, wherein a single layer of the neural network computes the partial cost function.

8. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, wherein the optical flow estimate is computed based on a previous optical flow estimate produced using a previous level of the first pyramidal set of features.

9. The computer-implemented method of claim **8**, further comprising upscaling the previous optical flow estimate before computing the optical flow estimate.

10. The computer-implemented method of claim **9**, wherein an initial optical flow estimate of zero is used to compute the previous optical flow estimate.

11. The computer-implemented method of claim **8**, further comprising repeating the computing and processing for each level in the first pyramidal set of features.

12. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, wherein the second image is after the first image in a video sequence.

13. The computer-implemented method of claim **1**, further comprising processing the optical flow estimate by a context network to produce a refined optical flow estimate.

14. A system, comprising:

a parallel processing unit configured to implement a neural network and a pyramidal image feature structure generator, wherein

the pyramidal image feature structure generator is configured to generate a first pyramidal set of features for a first image and

the neural network is configured to generate an optical flow estimate for the first image and a second image by:

computing a partial cost volume for a level of the first pyramidal set of features using features at the level of the first pyramidal set of features and warped features extracted from the second image, wherein the partial cost volume is computed across a limited range of pixels that is less than a full resolution of the first image, in pixels, at the level; and

processing the features and the partial cost volume to produce an optical flow estimate for the first image and the second image.

15. The system of claim **14**, wherein the pyramidal image feature structure generator is further configured to generate a second pyramidal set of features for the second image that includes the features extracted from the second image.

16. The system of claim **15**, further comprising a warping layer that is configured to warp the features extracted from the second image for the level of the second pyramidal set of images toward the features extracted from the first image using an optical flow estimate for a second level of the first pyramidal set of images to produce the warped features.

17. The system of claim **14**, wherein the pyramidal image feature structure generator generates the first pyramidal set of features for a first image by:

convolving the first image with overlapping filters to extract the features for a first level of the first pyramidal set of features;

convolving the first level with additional filters to extract the features for a subsequent level of the first pyramidal set of features; and

the convolving the subsequent level with additional filters to extract the features for another subsequent level of the first pyramidal set of features until a last level of the first pyramidal set of features is generated.

18. The system of claim **14**, wherein a single layer of the neural network generates the warped features.

19. The system of claim **14**, wherein the neural network is a convolutional neural network.

20. A non-transitory computer-readable media storing computer instructions for estimating optical flow that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform the steps of:

generating a first pyramidal set of features for a first image;

computing, by a neural network, a partial cost volume for a level of the first pyramidal set of features using features at the level of the first pyramidal set of features and warped features extracted from a second image, wherein the partial cost volume is computed across a limited range of pixels that is less than a full resolution of the first image, in pixels, at the level; and

processing, by the neural network, the features and the partial cost volume to produce an optical flow estimate for the first image and the second image.

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