The control section **65** comprises a handgrip **69** and a tape supply element **71**. A fluid passageway **73** (as shown in dotted lines in FIG. **3**) passes through the control section **65** from a socket **75**, where flexible hose **57** is fluidically connected to the fluid passage **73**, to a socket **77** wherein a plug **79** of the delivery section **67** may be received so as to fluidically connect with the delivery section **67**. The handgrip **69** is fitted with switches (in the form of buttons **81–86**) for operation of the various functions of the apparatus, as will be disclosed hereinafter. The handgrip **69** is also fitted with a socket **87** for electrical connection of the switches to the various electrical elements in the backpack unit. Additionally, the handgrip **69** is also fitted with an additional socket (not shown) for connection (via a cable connection) to the various electrical devices in the delivery section **67**.

The tape supply element **71** is shaped substantially as a hollow rectangle (as best seen in FIG. **5**) and comprises first and second cross members, **89** and **91**, and first and second connecting members **93** and **95**. A first disc **97** is rotatably mounted on connecting member **93**. A second disc **99** is rotatably mounted on connecting member **95**. The mounting of discs **97** and **99** is such that the discs are rotatably mounted substantially coaxially. Disc **97** is provided with a radially extending flange **101** and disc **99** is provided with a radially extending flange **103**. At least one of the discs **97** and **99** is moveable axially with respect to the other disc by being supported for rotation on a pin **105** or **107**, respectively, received within a corresponding bore **109** or **111** formed in cross member **93** or **95**. A spring (not shown) may be fitted in bore **109** and/or **111** so as to yieldably urge at least one of discs **97** and **99** axially toward the other disc. The discs are of such a diameter as to be received within the core of a roll wallboard tape, whereby a roll of wallboard tape may be supported on the discs for rotation so as to supply tape through the delivery section **67** of the handle.

The delivery section **67** substantially comprises a fluid conduit assembly **113** and a support plate **115**. The fluid conduit assembly, as best seen in FIG. **7**, comprises the plug **79** which is fluidically connected to a chamber **117** which in turn is connected to three fluid supply pipes **119**, **121** and **123**. Pipe **121** is fluidically connected to supply nozzle **125** and pipe **123** is fluidically connected to supply nozzle **127**. Pipe **119** is fluidically connected via elbow **129**, pipe **131** and valve **133** to tape supply nozzle **135**, which when assembled is disposed in region **137** of the support plate **115**.

A first stepping motor **139** is mounted on chamber **117** and connected via flexible drive cable **141** to a first bevel gear **143**. First bevel gear **143** mates with a second bevel gear **145** which is mounted for rotation with a first shaft **147**, shaft **147** having a screw thread formed on the outer periphery thereof. A slider **149** is slidably mounted on rails **151** and **153** with a knife edge (not shown) depending in the gap between rails **151** and **153**. Connection member **155** is connected to slider **149** and is fitted with a screw threaded bore corresponding to the screw thread formed on the outer periphery of the first shaft **147**, whereby rotation of the first shaft will cause movement of the slider **149** along rails **151** and **153**, thereby drawing the knife edge across plate **115**. Reversal of the rotation of the first shaft **147** by reversal of the rotation of the first stepping motor **139** will draw the slider, and hence the knife edge, back across plate **115**. By alternating the direction of rotation of first stepping motor **139**, the knife edge may be drawn back and forth across plate **115** as needed.

A second stepping motor **157** is also mounted on chamber **117** and is connected via flexible drive cable **159** to gear box **161**. Gear box **161**, in turn, contains gears to drive second shaft **163** upon which friction rollers **165**, **167** are mounted for rotation therewith. Plate **115** is fitted with guide rails **169** and **171** so as to guide wallboard tape beneath rollers **165** and **167**, beneath rails **151** and **153** as well as shaft **147** and over tape supply nozzle **135**.

In operation, a tape passing between guide rails **169** and **171** on plate **115** may be advanced a predetermined amount by actuation of stepping motor **157** so as to cause a predetermined rotation of shaft **163** and the friction rollers **165** and **167** mounted thereon. Likewise, the tape may be cut by actuation of the stepping motor **139** and the concomitant rotation of shaft **147** causing slider **149** (which is fitted with a knife edge) to slide across the width of the tape on plate **115**. In this regard, for example, switch **81** on handgrip **69** can actuate stepping motor **157** so as to cause the tape to advance in a predetermined amount. Likewise, switch **84** can be connected to stepping motor **139** so as to cause movement of slider **149** across the tape. It should be noted, however, that switch **84** alternatively changes the polarity of electrical current fed to stepping motor **139** so as to alternately draw the slider across and then back across the plate **115**. As the tape passes over tape supply nozzle **135** joint compound is applied to the lower face **173** of the tape **175**.

Turning now to FIGS. **8** and **9**, a second plate **177** is releasably attachable to the delivery section **67** of the handle. In this regard, as may best be seen in FIG. **9**, supply nozzles **125** and **127** may be respectively received in passages **179** and **181** in a snap-fit or force-fit manner. Passage **179** communicates with an orifice **183** formed in plate **177**. The orifice **183** is fitted with a gate **185** which is pivotally mounted on plate **177** so as to be moveable from a first position in which fluid passage through the orifice is prevented to a second position (as shown in FIG. **9**) wherein fluid passage through orifice **183** is permitted. The gate may be biased, by a torsion spring **187**, so as to be yieldably urged to the first position.

In a similar manner, passage **181** communicates with an orifice **189** formed in plate **177**. Orifice **189** is also fitted with a gate **191** pivotally connected to plate **177** so as to be moveable from a first position in which fluid flow through the orifice is prevented and a second position in which fluid flow through the orifice is permitted. Gate **191** may also be biased, as by torsion spring **193**, so as to yieldably urge the gate to the first position. Rollers **195**, **197** and **199** may be supported on a shaft **201** which in turn is journaled in a support member **203** carried in bore **205** formed in the plate **177**. A biasing spring **207** yieldably urges the rollers downwardly so as to force the lower side **173** of tape **175** into contact with wallboard **209**. A first resilient wiper blade **211** adjustably mounted in the plate **177** as by a screw support **213** smoothes and spreads joint compound delivered through the orifice **183**. A second flexible wiper blade **215** adjustably mounted in plate **177** as by screw support **217** moves and spreads the joint compound delivered to the wallboard through orifice **189**. A printing roller **219** may be provided with a surface pattern matching the surface pattern of the wallboard **209** so as to aid in disguising the position of the seams formed by the pres-