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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/939,540	09/13/2004	Russell E. Blette	58802US003	4128
32692	7590	06/26/2009	EXAMINER	
3M INNOVATIVE PROPERTIES COMPANY PO BOX 33427 ST. PAUL, MN 55133-3427			ROWAN, KURT C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3643	
			NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			06/26/2009	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Appeal No: 2009-012070
Application: 10/939,540
Appellant: Russell E. Blette et al.

Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences Docketing Notice

Application 10/939,540 was received from the Technology Center at the Board on July 09, 2008 and has been assigned Appeal No: 2009-012070.

A review of the file indicates that the following documents have been filed by appellant:

Appeal Brief filed on: August 01, 2006
Reply Brief filed on: NONE
Request for Hearing filed on: NONE

In all future communications regarding this appeal, please include both the application number and the appeal number.

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By order of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences.



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32692 7590 07/10/2007
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APPLICATION NO./ CONTROL NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR / PATENT IN REEXAMINATION	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
10939540	9/13/04	BLETTE ET AL.	58802US003

3M INNOVATIVE PROPERTIES COMPANY
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Kurt Rowan

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Commissioner for Patents

see attached PTO 1449

Kurt Rowan
Primary Examiner
Art Unit: 3643

OCT 05 2006

Substitute for form 1449A/PTO (modified) INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Use as many sheets as necessary) Page 1 of 1	Application Number	10/939540
	Filing Date	September 13, 2004
	First Named Inventor	Blette, Russell E.
	Confirmation Number	
	Attorney Case Number	58802US003

U.S. Patent Documents						
Exam. Init.*	Cite No.	Document Number		Publication Date MM-DD-YYYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Pages, Columns, Lines, Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
		Doc. Number-(Kind Code if Known)				
KR	A1	US-	1,762,572	06-1930	Davidson, Frederic A.	
	A2	US-				
	A3	US-				
	A4	US-				
	A5	US-				
	A6	US-				
	A7	US-				

Foreign Patent Documents							
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	B1						
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	C1		
	C2		
	C3		

*Examiner: <u>Kurt Rowan</u>	Date Considered: <u>6/26/2007</u>
EXAMINER: Initial # reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 809. Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.	

Information Disclosure Statement

32692

Customer Number

Patent
Case No.: 58802US003

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

First Named Inventor: BLETTE, RUSSELL E.
Application No.: 10/939540 Confirmation No.:
Filed: September 13, 2004
Title: LINE SPLICE MULTI-CARD WITH BUILT IN SPLICE ASSEMBLY TOOL

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Mail Stop: Amendment
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING OR TRANSMISSION [37 CFR § 1.8(a)]

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being:

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June 28, 2007 Joyce M. Courtney
Date Signed by: Joyce M. Courtney

Dear Sir:

Pursuant to 37 CFR §§ 1.56, 1.97, and 1.98, enclosed is a completed Form PTO-1449, citing references submitted for consideration by the Examiner. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner initial and return the enclosed Form PTO-1449 to indicate that each reference has been considered.

Fees

- It is believed that no fee is due; however, in the event a fee is required, please charge the fee to Deposit Account No. 13-3723.
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- Please charge the fee provided in 37 CFR § 1.17(p) to Deposit Account No. 13-3723. One copy of this sheet marked duplicate is also enclosed.

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Under 37 CFR § 1.97(e)(1), I hereby certify that each item of information contained in this Information Disclosure Statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three (3) months prior to the filing of this Information Disclosure Statement.

Statement Under 37 § CFR 1.704(d)

Under 37 CFR § 1.704(d), I hereby state that each item of information contained in this Information Disclosure Statement was first cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart application and that this communication was not received by any individual designated in 37 CFR § 1.56(c) more than thirty (30) days prior to the filing of this Information Disclosure Statement.

Copies of Documents

Copies of any cited foreign patents, foreign publications, non-patent literature documents, and any pending U.S. applications filed before June 30, 2003, are enclosed. Copies of any pending U.S. applications filed after June 30, 2003 that can be accessed on the USPTO's IFW system are not enclosed as per USPTO Waiver dated September 21, 2004. Copies of any U.S. patents and published U.S. patent applications are not enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

June 28, 2007
Date

By: Robert H. Jordan
Robert H. Jordan, Reg. No.: 31,973
Telephone No.: 651-733-6866

Office of Intellectual Property Counsel
3M Innovative Properties Company
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Substitute for form 1449A/PTO (modified) INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Use as many sheets as necessary) Page 1 of 1	Application Number	10/939540
	Filing Date	September 13, 2004
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U.S. Patent Documents						
Exam. Init.*	Cite No.	Document Number		Publication Date MM-DD-YYYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Pages, Columns, Lines, Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
		Doc. Number-(Kind Code if Known)				
	A1	US-	6,880,289	04-19-2005	Yin	
	A2	US-	2005/0022441	02-03-2005	Blette et al.	
	A3	US-				
	A4	US-				
	A5	US-				

Foreign Patent Documents							
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		Ctry. Code	Number-KindCode (If known)				
	B1	WO	91/05963	05-02-1991			
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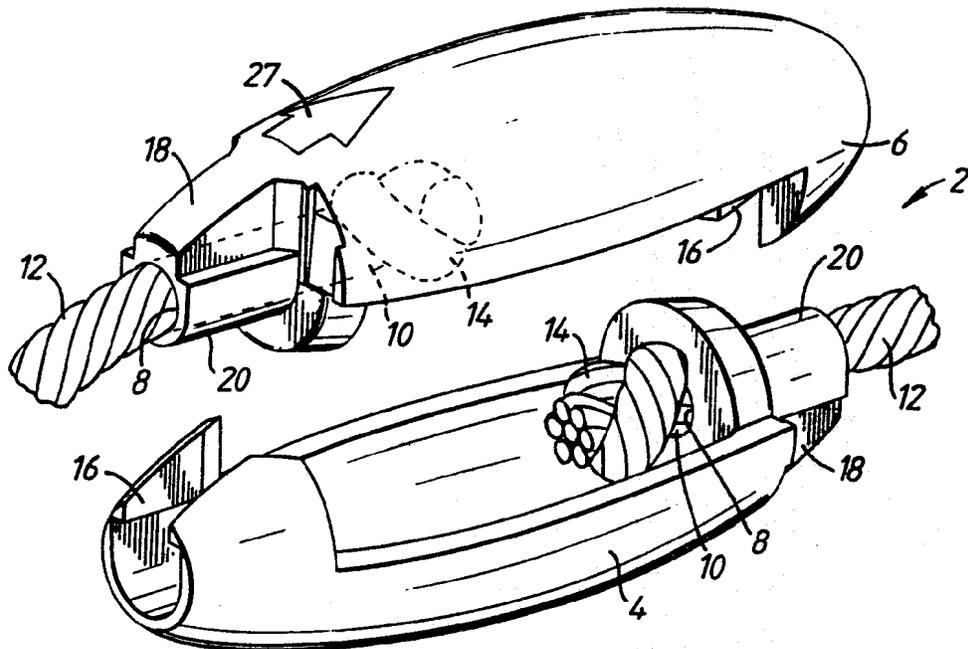
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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

<p>(51) International Patent Classification ⁵ : F16G 11/00, A01K 75/00, 91/047</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>(11) International Publication Number: WO 91/05963 (43) International Publication Date: 2 May 1991 (02.05.91)</p>
<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB90/01546 (22) International Filing Date: 9 October 1990 (09.10.90) (30) Priority data: 8923381.1 17 October 1989 (17.10.89) GB (71)(72) Applicant and Inventor: JAGGERS, Stephen, Craig [GB/GB]; Sandpipers, Steephill Cove, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1UG (GB). (74) Agent: JONES, Graham, Henry; Graham Jones & Company, 77 Beaconsfield Road, Blackheath, London SE3 7LG (GB).</p>	<p>(81) Designated States: AT, AT (European patent), AU, BB, BF (European patent), BF (OAPI patent), BG, BJ (OAPI patent), BR, CF (OAPI patent), CG (OAPI patent), CH, CH (European patent), CM (OAPI patent), DE, DE (European patent), DK, DK (European patent), ES (European patent), FI, FR (European patent), GA (OAPI patent), GB, GB (European patent), GR (European patent), HU, IT (European patent), JP, KP, KR, LK, LU, LU (European patent), MC, MG, ML (OAPI patent), MR (OAPI patent), MW, NL, NL (European patent), NO, RO, SD, SE, SE (European patent), SN (OAPI patent), SU, TD (OAPI patent), TG (OAPI patent), US.</p> <p>Published <i>With international search report.</i></p>	

(54) Title: A CONNECTOR FOR FISHING NETS



(57) Abstract

A connector (2) for fishing nets, which connector (2) comprises first and second parts (4, 6) which are substantially identical and which releasably connect together, the first and the second parts (4, 6) each having means (8) for receiving an end (10) of a fishing net rope (12) for the purpose of allowing two separate fishing net ropes (12) attached to two separate fishing nets (28) to be joined together.

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A CONNECTOR FOR FISHING NETS

This invention relates to a connector for fishing nets.

On fishing boats, static fishing nets are traditionally set in fleets and there may be up to
5 three miles or more of the fishing nets. The fishing nets are usually kept in net lockers and they are joined together as required to form a required fishing net length. In addition, it will sometimes occur that a net gets torn, in which case the torn net must be removed
10 and a new net inserted in the overall fishing net length. The joining together of individual fishing nets is usually effected by tying together fishing net ropes attached to the fishing nets. Tying of the fishing net ropes is not too much of a problem but undoing knots in the fishing
15 net ropes does present a considerable problem. After use, the knots tend to become very tight and they are not easy to undo.

It is an aim of the present invention to obviate or reduce the above mentioned problem.

20 Accordingly, this invention provides a connector for fishing nets, which connector comprises first and second parts which are substantially identical and which releasably connect together, the first and the second parts

each having means for receiving an end of a fishing net rope for the purpose of allowing two separate fishing net ropes attached to two separate fishing nets to be joined together.

5 The connector is extremely easy to use. The first and the second parts can be connected together more simply than tying a knot. If it is desired to separate the connector, then this can also easily be effected, and in a far more simpler manner than undoing a wet knot in a rope that has been subjected to considerable tension. 10 Because the first and the second parts are substantially identical, fishermen do not need to concern themselves with ensuring that they have two parts which are connectible together. The fishermen will know that any two parts will 15 connect together and this again makes for easy and fast use.

 The means for receiving the end of the fishing net rope is preferably such as to allow the fishing net rope to rotate with respect to the connector. The rotation of 20 the fishing net rope helps to avoid tangling of nets, especially when the fishing nets are being let out or hauled in over the side of the fishing boat. In addition, the connectors may help to avoid snagging on the side of the boat or on other pieces of equipment, this snagging 25 being such as to present quite a problem where knots are

used to tie the fishing net ropes together.

Preferably, the connector is one in which the means for receiving the end of the fishing net rope is an aperture, and in which the fishing net rope is
5 rotateably securable in the aperture by being knotted at one end.

The first and the second parts advantageously connect together to form a hollow body. Preferably, the first and the second parts are so shaped that the hollow
10 body is of a general oval shape.

Preferably, the first and the second parts connect together with a sliding action. Other types of connecting action may however be employed.

When the first and the second parts connect
15 together with a sliding action, then the connector may be one in which the first and the second parts each have an open slot at one end and a web at the other end, the connector being such that the web on one of the first and the second parts fits into the slot on the other of the
20 first and the second parts to effect the sliding connection.

Preferably, the first and the second parts are made of a plastics material. The connector then floats easily. Other materials may however be employed if desired.

An embodiment of the invention will now be
25 described solely by way of example and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a connector for fishing nets.

Figure 2 is an exploded perspective view of the connector shown in Figure 1;

5 Figure 3 is an end view of the lower part shown in Figure 2 and looking from left to right;

Figure 4 is an end view of the lower part shown in Figure 2 and looking from right to left;

10 Figure 5 illustrates a known method of connecting fishing nets; and

Figure 6 illustrates a method of connecting fishing nets using the connector shown in Figure 1.

15 Referring to Figures 1 - 4, there is shown a connector 2 comprising first and second parts 4, 6 respectively. The first and the second parts 4, 6 are substantially identical and they releasably connect together.

20 The first and the second parts 4, 6 each have means in the form of an aperture 8 for receiving an end 10 of a fishing net rope 12 for the purpose of allowing two separate fishing net ropes as shown in Figure 2 to be connected together. The ends 10 of the fishing net ropes 12 are each provided with a knot 14 and the knots 14 are larger than the apertures 8 so that the fishing net ropes 12 cannot pull back through the apertures 8. Advantageously, the fishing net ropes 12 are able to rotate in the apertures 8 so that the fishing net ropes 12 are able to rotate with respect to the connector 2. This rotation of the fishing

25

net ropes helps to avoid tangling and fouling of fishing nets attached to the fishing net ropes 12.

5 The first and the second parts 4, 6 are shaped as shown so that they connect together to form a hollow body which is of a general oval shape.

10 The first and the second parts 4, 6 connect together with a sliding action. More specifically, the first and the second parts 4, 6 each have an open slot 16 at one end and a web 18 at the other end. The web 18 on one of the first and the second parts 4, 6 fits into the slot 16 on the other of the first and the second parts 4,6 to effect the sliding action. As shown in Figures 2 and 4, the web 18 is positioned between a part circular portion 20 through which the fishing net rope 12 passes. Recessed portions 22,24 are provided on either side of the web 18 as shown in Figure 4.

15 The first and the second parts 4, 6 are made of a plastics material. The plastics material enables the connector 2 easily to float. Also, the plastics material enables the first and the second parts 4, 6 easily to slide together.

20 Figure 1 shows how the first and the second parts 4, 6 at one end meet such that two slots 26 are formed. The slots 26 are able to receive a flat bladed screwdriver or

similar instrument for the purpose of helping the first and the second parts easily to slide apart, for example if they are wet or icy and difficult to grip during use. A raised arrow head 27 having transverse gripping ribs (not shown) is also provided for the purpose of forming a thumb grip for helping to push the first and the second parts 4, 6 apart. Since the first and the second parts 4, 6 are identical, it will be understood with reference to Figure 1 that there are also two slots 26 and a raised arrow head at the other end of the connector 2, but underneath and so not visible in Figure 1.

Referring now to Figure 5, there is shown a number of fishing nets 28 which have been connected together by tying fishing net ropes 30, 32 together with knots 34. The knots can be difficult to tie, especially in cold weather and/or if one of the fishing net ropes 30, 32 is under strain. The knots 34 are especially difficult to undo, especially if they are wet and have been subjected to strain so that the knots will have been pulled very tight.

- 7 -

Referring now to Figure 6, similar parts have been given the same reference numerals for ease of comparison and understanding. In Figure 6, it will be seen that the knots 34 have been replaced by the connectors 2. The connectors 2 enable the different fishing net ropes 30 and the different fishing net ropes 32 easily to be connected and dis-connected from each other. Thus fishing net lengths of any desired size can easily be produced and damaged fishing nets 28 can easily be removed from a length of fishing net and replaced as may be desired.

It is to be appreciated that the embodiment of the invention described above with reference to the accompanying drawings has been given by way of example only and that modifications may be effected. Thus, for example, means other than the apertures 8 may be employed for securing the fishing net ropes 12 to the first and the second parts 4, 6. Also, the first and the second parts 4, 6 may be of a different shape to that shown. Because the parts 4, 6 are concave, they may each be provided with one or more strengthening webs (not shown) extending transversely across the inside of the parts 4, 6.

CLAIMS

1. A connector for fishing nets, which connector comprises first and second parts which are substantially identical and which releasably connect together, the first and the second parts each having means for receiving
5 an end of a fishing net rope for the purpose of allowing two separate fishing net ropes attached to two separate fishing nets to be joined together.

2. A connector according to claim 1 in which the means for receiving the end of the fishing net rope is
10 such as to allow the fishing net rope to rotate with respect to the connector.

3. A connector according to claim 2 in which the means for receiving the end of the fishing net rope is an aperture, and in which the fishing net rope is
15 rotateably securable in the aperture by being knotted at one end.

4. A connector according to any one of the preceding claims in which the first and the second parts connect together to form a hollow body.

5. A connector according to claim 4 in which the first and the second parts are so shaped that the hollow body is of a general oval shape.

5 6. A connector according to any one of the preceding claims in which the first and the second parts connect together with a sliding action.

10 7. A connector according to claim 6 in which the first and the second parts each have an open slot at one end and a web at the other end, the connector being such that the web on one of the first and the second parts fits into the slot on the other of the first and the second parts to effect the sliding connection.

15 8. A connector according to any one of the preceding claims in which the first and the second parts are made of a plastics material.

9. A connector for fishing nets, substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

1/2

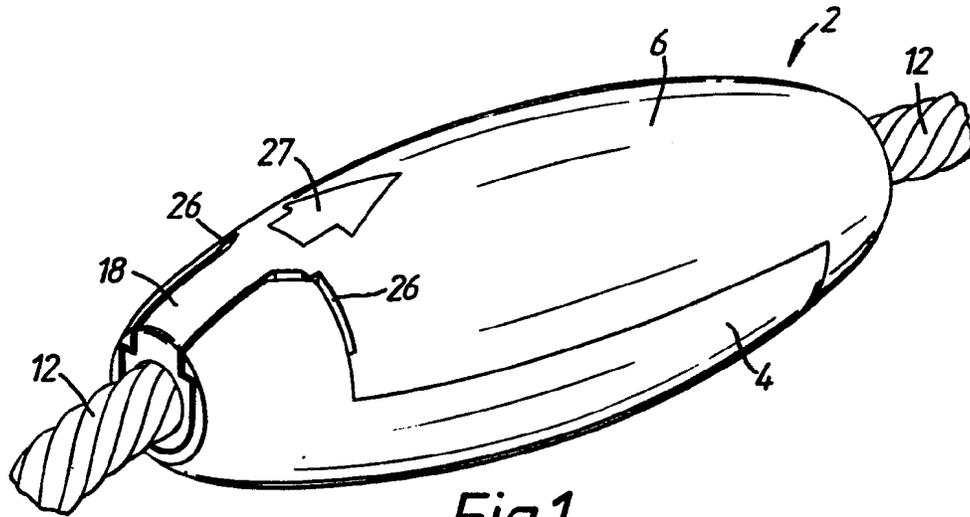


Fig. 1.

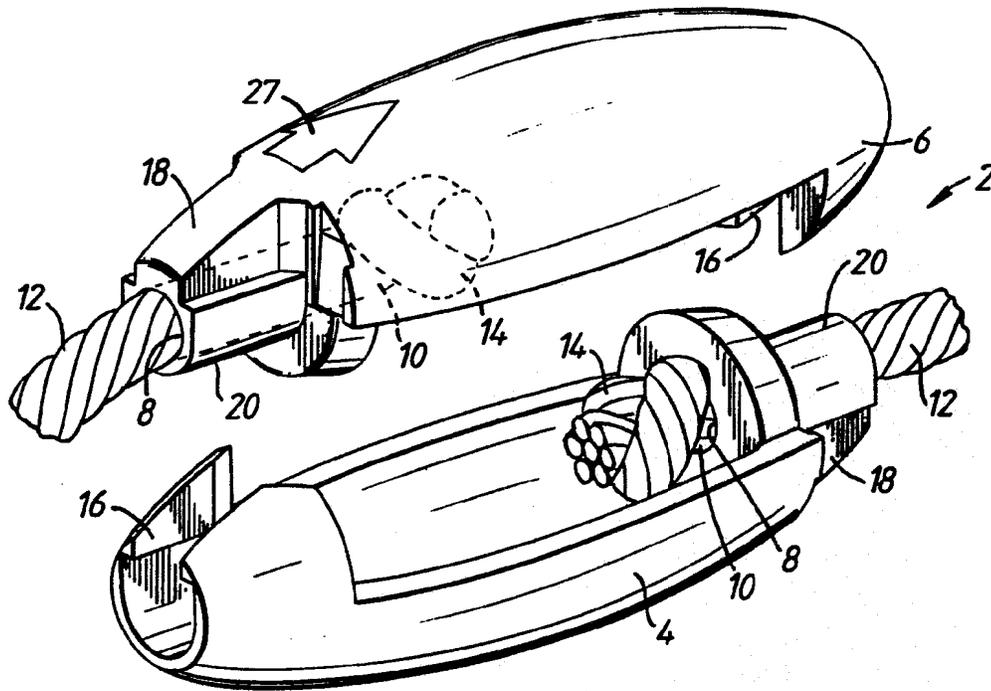


Fig. 2.

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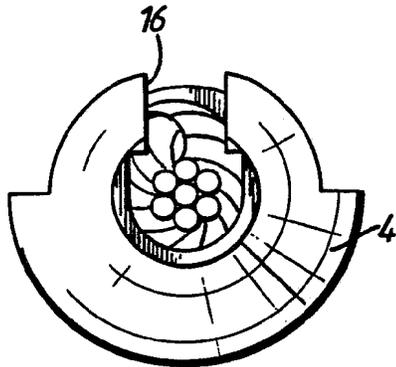


Fig. 3.

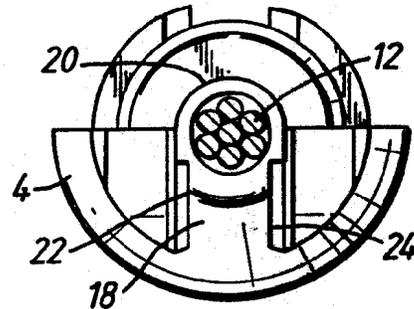


Fig. 4.

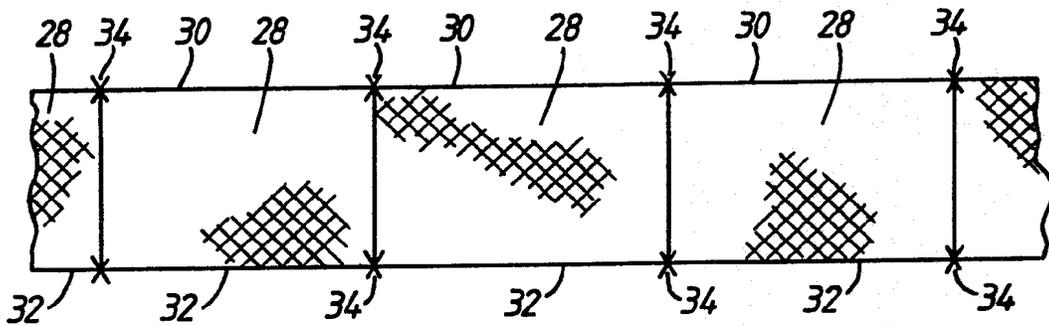


Fig. 5.

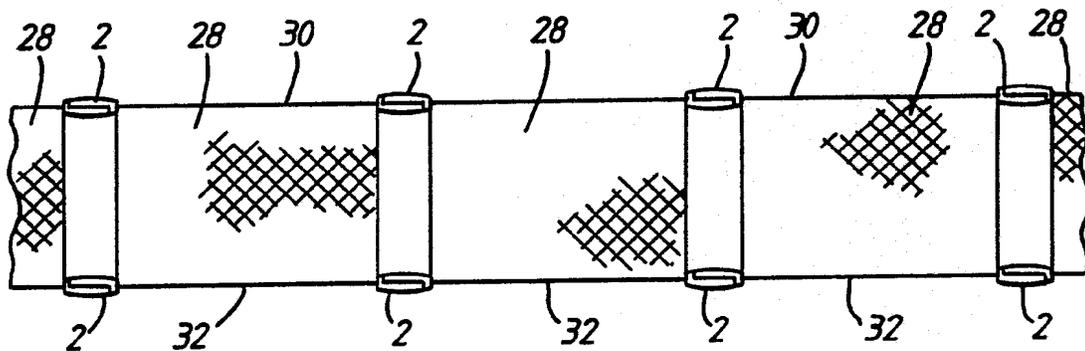
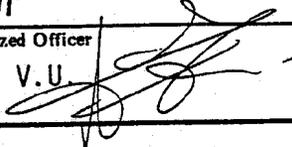


Fig. 6.

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC		
Int.Cl. 5 F16G11/00 ; A01K75/00 ; A01K91/047		
II. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
Int.Cl. 5	F16G ; A01K	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁸		
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ⁹		
Category ¹⁰	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³
X	DE,A,3343554 (MÜLLER) 13 June 1985 see pages 8 - 9; figures 1, 4, 6 ---	1-6, 8, 9
X	US,A,4049357 (HAMISCH) 20 September 1977 see abstract; figures 2-4 ---	1, 4-9
A	---	3
A	DE,A,3403612 (JOHANSEN) 30 August 1984 ---	
A	FR,A,2176322 (CHALLIER) 26 October 1973 ---	
A	CA,A,1106158 (WEISSE) 04 August 1981 ---	
<p>¹⁰ Special categories of cited documents :</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>		
IV. CERTIFICATION		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report	
25 JANUARY 1991	14. 02. 91	
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ANNEX TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
ON INTERNATIONAL PATENT APPLICATION NO.

GB9001546

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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

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Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
DE-A-3343554	13-06-85	None	
US-A-4049357	20-09-77	None	
DE-A-3403612	30-08-84	SE-B- 460453 SE-A- 8400576	16-10-89 17-08-84
FR-A-2176322	26-10-73	None	
CA-A-1106158	04-08-81	None	

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EFS ID:	1919809
Application Number:	10939540
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	4128
Title of Invention:	Line splice multi-card with built-in splice assembly tool
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	Russell E. Blette
Customer Number:	32692
Filer:	Robert H. Jordan
Filer Authorized By:	
Attorney Docket Number:	58802US003
Receipt Date:	28-JUN-2007
Filing Date:	13-SEP-2004
Time Stamp:	12:26:01
Application Type:	Utility

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no
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File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Filed	SuppIDS-1_58802US003.PD F	2316160	no	3

Warnings:

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2	Foreign Reference	WO9105963.pdf	544338	no	15
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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/939,540	09/13/2004	Russell E. Blette	58802US003	4128

32692 7590 11/03/2006

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EXAMINER

ROWAN, KURT C

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3643

DATE MAILED: 11/03/2006

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 10/939,540
Filing Date: September 13, 2004
Appellant(s): BLETTE ET AL.

MAILED

NOV 03 2006

GROUP 3600

James L Young
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed August 1, 2006 appealing from the Office action mailed March 3, 2006.

(1) Real Party in Interest

A statement identifying by name the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) Status of Claims

The statement of the status of claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) Status of Amendments After Final

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is correct.

(7) Claims Appendix

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(8) Evidence Relied Upon

(9) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claim 21 is rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious over Foster.

(10) Response to Argument

Applicant argues that Foster is not meant to be permanent. It should be pointed out that the word "permanent" is a relative term. However, Foster is meant to be a permanent connection for as long as the piece is worn. The connection of Foster continues or endures without fundamental or marked change for as long as one desires which is the same in the present invention. Foster locks the connection due to detents shown noting Figs. 8-11 and this connection is meant to be permanent for as long as one desires to wear the piece. While, both in Foster and the present invention, the connection can be broken, the connection can remain as long as one wishes. Since the connection can be years or decades in Foster, this connection is thought to be permanent. Hence the meaning of the word permanent used is not contrary to the plain meaning or the usage in the specification. It should be pointed out that the amount of force required to break the connection between the prior art is not stated and the amount of force required to break the connection in the present invention is also not stated. Also, applicant argues the intended use of the permanent connection, but Foster shows the structure to perform that intended use as to being a permanent connection. In fact, applicant's connection is also a removable connection.

As to the tapered surface, Foster shows a tapered exterior surface as the indentation near the middle of the connector in Fig. 8. However, this can be considered

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as part of the first end of the connector. Also, Foster shows a tapered exterior surface as eyelet 19 which is part of the first end of the female connector. This surface is tapered in extent and cross-section.

(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner's answer.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

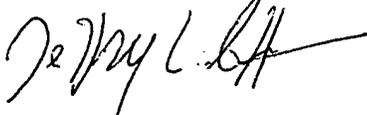
Respectfully submitted,

KR



KURT ROWAN
PRIMARY EXAMINER
GROUP 3200

Conferees:

JG 

FP 