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(54) **Inflatable packing element for use in subterranean wells.**

(57) An inflatable packing element (10) for an inflatable packer or bridge plug utilized in subterranean wells comprises a tubular elastomeric sleeve (30) which is surrounded by a plurality of circumferentially overlapping flexible metal ribs (12). The opposite ends of the ribs (12) are respectively welded to an external surface provided on a force transmitting sleeve (14). The sleeve (14) is provided with a shoulder (14a) having an abutting relationship with an internally projecting shoulder (20a) provided on the tubular mounting structure (20) for the inflatable element (10).

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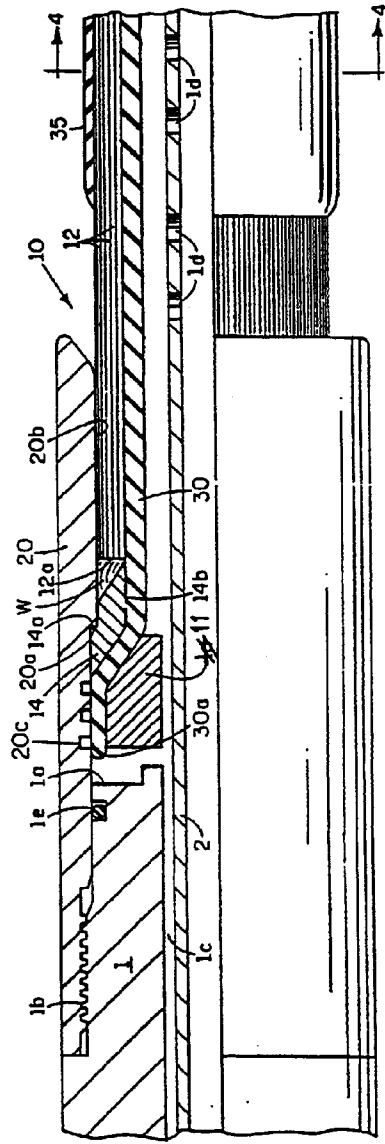


FIG. 2

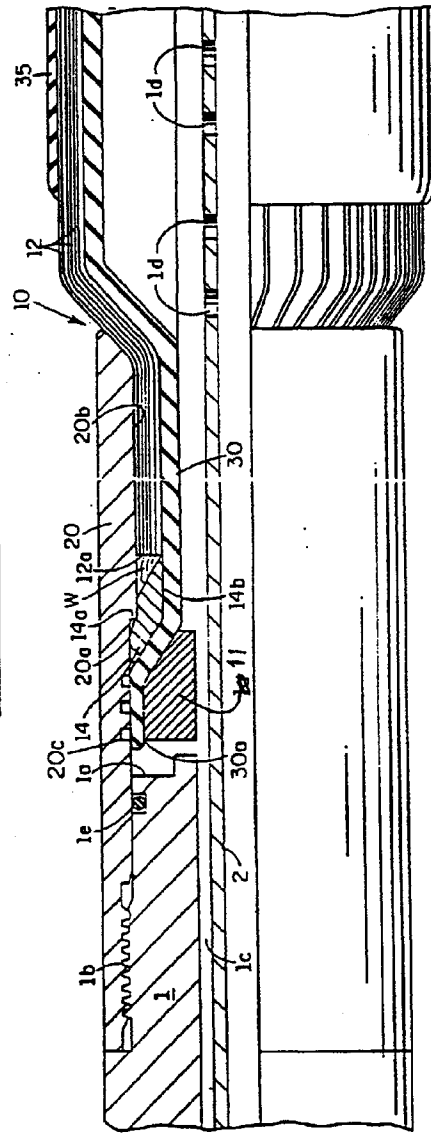


FIG. 3



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
A	US-A-4 403 660 (M.G. COONE) * Column 6, lines 44-46; figure 10 * ---	1	E 21 B 33/127
A	US-A-4 544 165 (M.G. COONE) * Column 3, lines 36-48; figure 3 * ---	1	
P,X	US-A-4 979 570 (R.K. MODY) * Column 3, lines 36-42; figure 2 * -----	1	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			E 21 B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 18-12-1991	Examiner RAMPOLMANN K.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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