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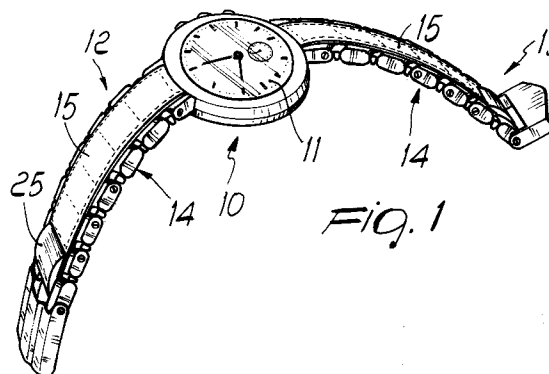
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**I-20123 Milan (IT)**(54) **Wrist watch strap.**

(57) Wrist watch strap (10) comprising a set (14) of metallic links, arranged in side-by-side mutually associated rows, on which an at least partial covering element (15), made of leather or the like, is removably coupled by means of anchoring elements (25).

**EP 0 557 578 A1**

The present invention relates to a wrist watch strap.

As is known, straps, in particular for wrist watches, are substantially of two types; those made of metal and those made of leather or the like.

There are also straps made of other materials, such as plastic materials or the like.

Metal straps are stronger and have a substantially unlimited durability, but due to a matter of fashion, in recent times there has been an increase in the use of leather straps, which are less durable.

The aim of the present invention is to provide a wrist watch strap which has the strength qualities of a metal strap combined with the aesthetic qualities of a leather strap.

A consequent primary object of the invention is to provide a strap whose leather decoration can be easily removed and replaced.

Another important object of the invention is to provide a product which is alternative with respect to those currently commercially available.

Not least object of the invention is to provide a low-cost strap with conventional equipment and facilities.

This aim, these objects and others which will become apparent hereinafter are achieved by a wrist watch strap which is characterized in that it comprises a set of metallic links arranged in side-by-side mutually associated rows, on which an at least partial covering element is removably coupled by means of anchoring elements.

Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the detailed description of an embodiment thereof, illustrated only by way of non-limitative example in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

figure 1 is a perspective view of a wrist watch with the strap according to the invention;

figure 2 is an exploded perspective detail view of the strap of figure 1;

figure 3 is a partially sectional view of a detail of a leather decoration element;

figure 4 is a profile detail view of an element for anchoring the leather decoration element to a set of metallic links;

figure 5 is a longitudinally sectional perspective view of an anchoring element arranged at one end of the strap;

figure 6 is an enlarged-scale sectional detail view of the strap;

figure 7 is a partially sectional top view of a portion of the strap.

With reference to the above figures, a wrist watch with a strap is generally designated by the reference numeral 10 and comprises a watch case 11, to which two portions 12 and 13 of the strap are fixed.

Each strap portion 12,13 is composed of a set 14 of metallic links, arranged in side-by-side mutually associated rows, on which a covering element 15 is removably coupled. The coupling element 15 is advantageously made of a decorative material such as leather.

In particular, the set of links 14 is composed of links arranged in three rows, two thicker lateral rows 16 and 17 and a thinner central row 18. The central row 18 forms, together with the lateral rows 16,17, a longitudinal recess for accommodating the covering element 15.

The rows of links are joined together in a known manner by means of a plurality of transverse pins 19.

A plurality of seats 20 is thus defined at the axis of symmetry of the thinner central row 18, and each seat expediently has a rectangular configuration with upper edges which protrude inward.

Each seat 20 accommodates a substantially cylindrical-shaped tubular head 21 of a clip 22, which is manufactured, e.g., by deforming a metallic lamina.

The head 21 is located substantially at the center of said clip 22. The clip 22 also has two lateral wings 23 which protrude outwardly from said head 21 and are embedded in the covering element 15.

An end clip 22a has an extended wing 23a which protrudes longitudinally outward from beneath the end of the covering element 15 and has a hole or missing portion 23b formed therein.

In practice, the covering element 15 is formed by a plurality of layers, which are joined by glueing and/or by stitches, and by an inner layer 24 provided with holes for the passage of the heads 21. The lateral wings 23 are embedded between said layers.

Said inner layer 24 has the same width as the overlying layers and is accommodated in the seat defined between the lateral rows 16 and 17, on top of the thinner central row 18.

As can be seen in figures 4, 5 and 6, the cylindrical-shaped tubular heads 21 have rounded corners and enter the seats 20 by elastic deformation.

The free ends of the element 15 are fixed at one end to the strap portion 12,13 by means of a metallic plate 25 and a screw 26.

The plate in fact has a tab 25a to be inserted into the hole 23b and in a corresponding hole 27 of the set of links 14, and the tab 25a has a threaded hole for the screw 26 (see figure 2).

The other remaining terminal portion may be automatically fixed to the case 11 of the watch during strap assembly, for example, by conventional releasable fixing means which are disengageable in order to permit replacement of the

covering element 15. Alternatively the free end of the element 15 may be fixed to the row 18 by a clip 22, located adjacent the case 11, as described heretofore.

In practice it has been observed that the intended aim and objects of the present invention have been achieved, a strap having been provided whose structure is composed of a metallic part and of a decorative part, made of leather or the like, which can be conveniently replaced simply and rapidly.

The assembly is advantageous from an aesthetic point of view and, from the technical point of view, it combines the strength characteristics of metal straps with the aesthetic characteristics of leather straps.

In practice, the materials employed, so long as they are compatible with the contingent use, as well as the dimensions, may be any according to the requirements.

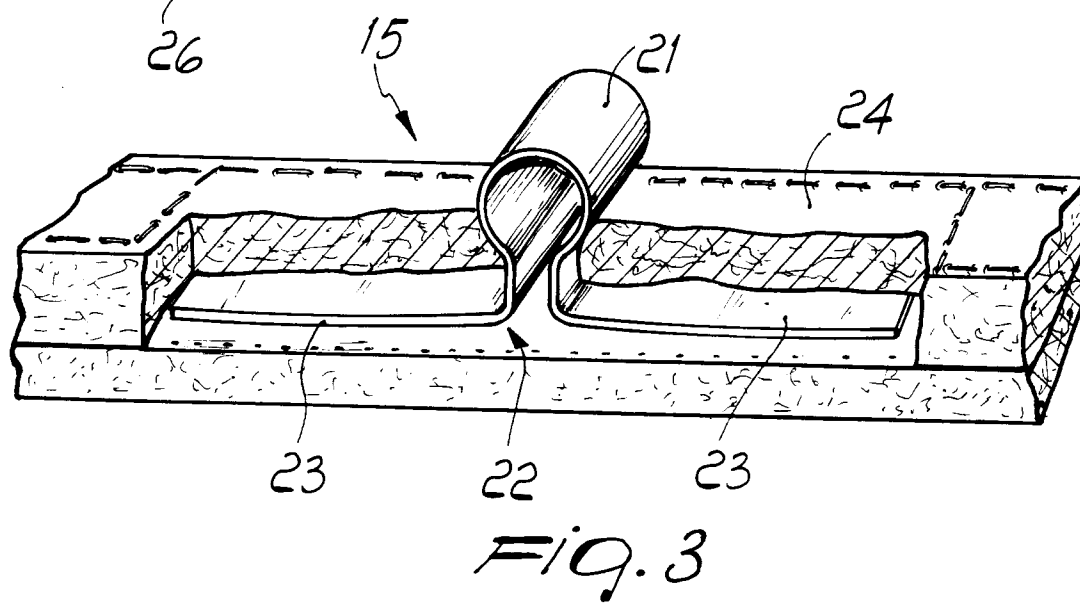
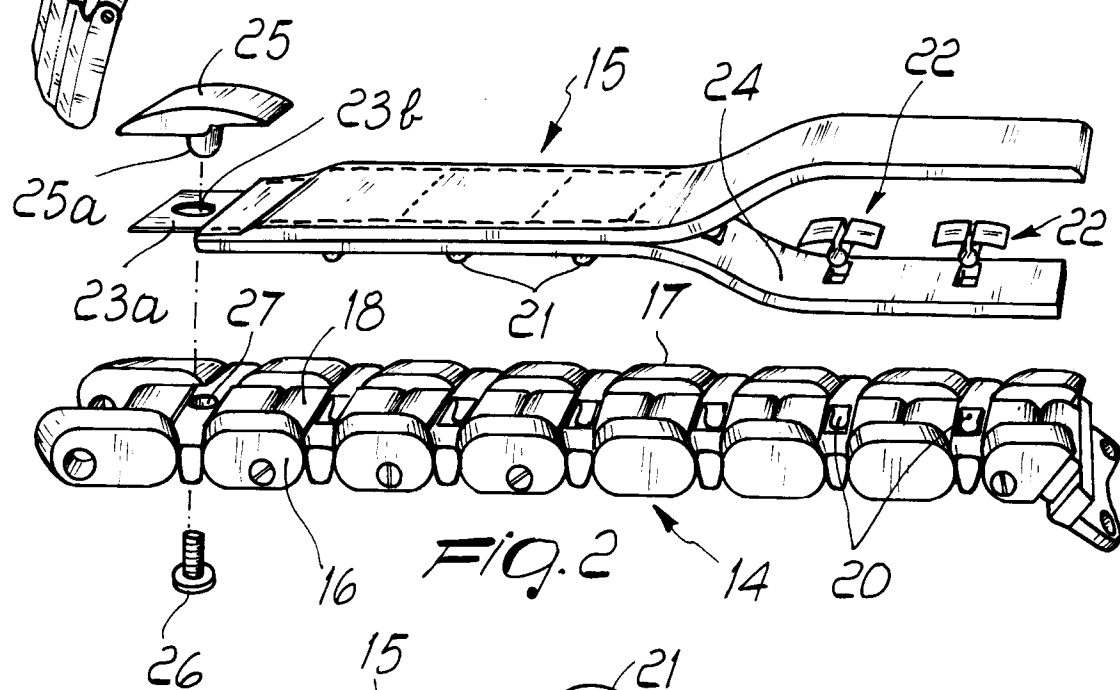
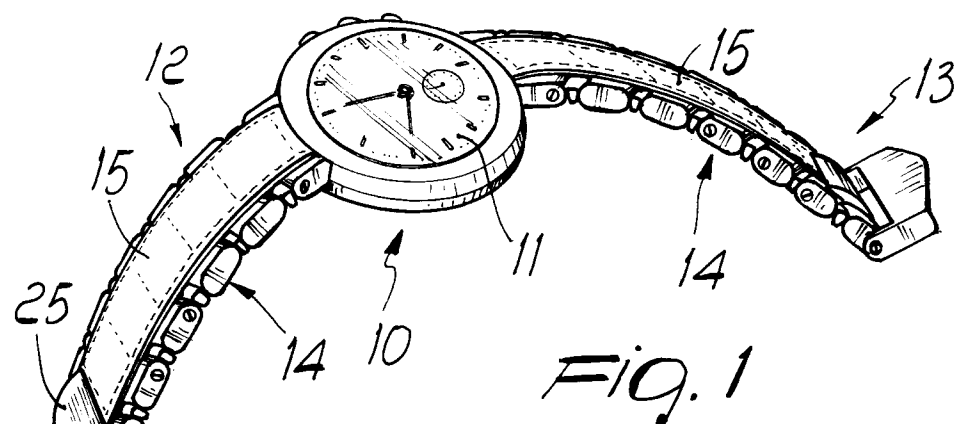
Where technical features mentioned in any claim are followed by reference signs, those reference signs have been included for the sole purpose of increasing the intelligibility of the claims and accordingly such reference signs do not have any limiting effect on the scope of each element identified by way of example by such reference signs.

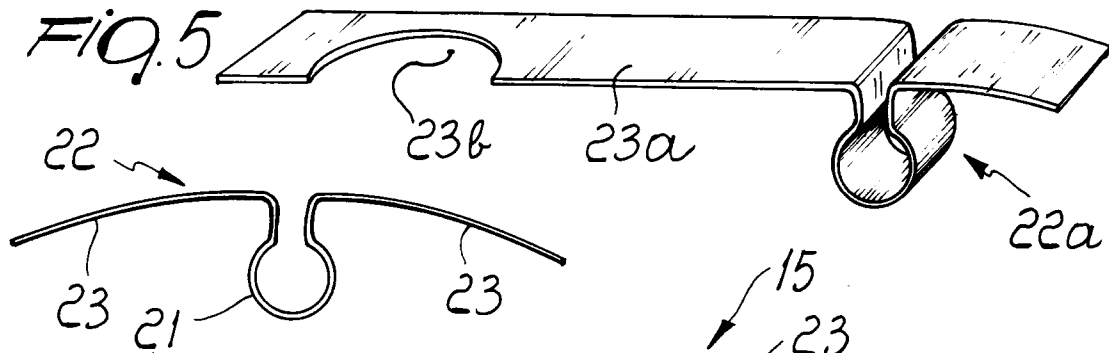
## Claims

1. Wrist watch strap, characterized in that it comprises a set of metallic links arranged in side-by-side mutually associated rows, on which an at least partial covering element, made of leather or the like, is removably coupled by means of anchoring elements. 35
2. Wrist watch strap according to claim 1, characterized in that said anchoring elements comprise cylindrical-shaped tubular heads which extend from metallic clips produced by deforming and shaping laminae. 40
3. Wrist watch strap according to claim 1, characterized in that each clip has a cylindrical-shaped tubular head at its center and two lateral wings. 45
4. Wrist watch strap according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said wings of each clip are embedded in the structure of said at least partial covering element, from which only said head protrudes. 50
5. Wrist watch strap according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said anchoring elements comprise seats for said 55

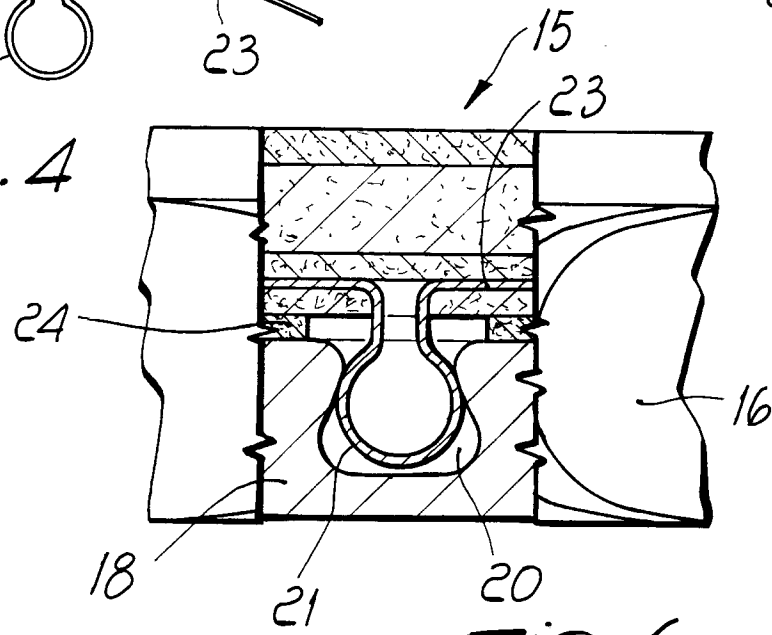
heads of said clips which are located along said set of metallic links.

6. Wrist watch strap according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said seats have edges which protrude inward, said cylindrical-shaped tubular heads being inserted in said seats in a snap-together manner by elastic deformation. 10
7. Wrist watch strap according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said seats and said clips are arranged at the longitudinal axis of symmetry respectively of said set of metallic links and of said covering element. 15
8. Wrist watch strap according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that a free end of said covering element is fixed to the set of metallic links by means of a plate provided with a tab which is inserted in a hole of a wing of a terminal clip which protrudes from said covering element, a screw passing through a corresponding hole of the set of links and being screwed in a complementarily threaded hole of said tab. 20

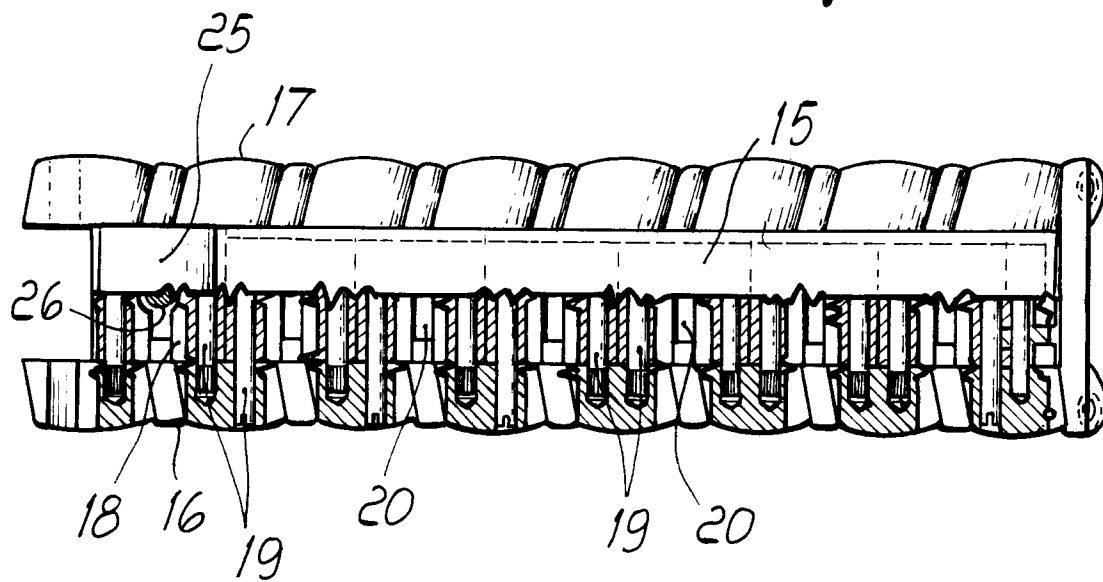




*FIG. 4*



*FIG. 6*



*FIG. 7*



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## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 92 11 6121

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)
X	US-A-2 165 115 (J. P. SCHULTEISS) * page 1, column 2, line 38 - page 2, column 1, line 60; figures 1-9 * ---	1,2	A44C5/00 A44C5/02 A44C5/14
X	US-A-1 820 576 (C. A. MEALY) * page 1, line 39 - line 82; figures 1-4 * -----	1	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			A44C
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 09 JUNE 1993	Examiner FAIRBANKS S.A.
<b>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</b> 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			