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(71) Applicant: **Chen, Eddie**
Taichung City (TW)

(72) Inventor: **Chen, Eddie**
Taichung City (TW)

(74) Representative:
Barlow, Roy James
J.A. KEMP & CO.
14, South Square
Gray's Inn
London WC1R 5LX (GB)

(54) Method of forming a boot

(57) A method of making a boot having an upper (10), a lower (20) and a sole (50). The method includes the step of connecting the lower (20) to the sole (50) in a water-tight relationship only after the lower (20) is connected to the upper (10).

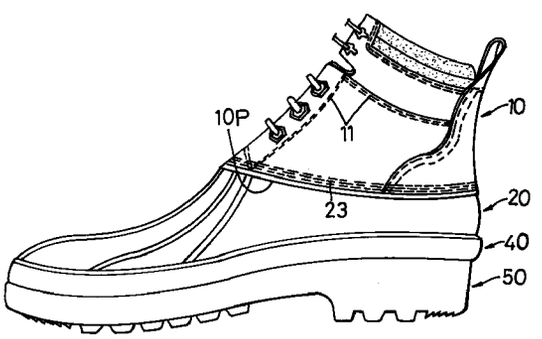

FIG. 2

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Description

The invention relates to a boot, more particularly to a method of forming a boot having an upper, a lower and an outsole.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the conventional method of forming a boot comprises the steps of:

(a) molding the outsole (4) integrally with the lower (3) so as to form a unitary construction from a waterproof polymeric thermosetting material;
(b) forming an upper (1) from a relatively flexible material, the upper having a lower peripheral edge stitched to an upper peripheral edge of the lower (3) to form a seam juncture (5); and
(c) coating the inner surface of the seam juncture with a waterproof layer.

Because the seam juncture (5) is spaced from the top of the boot at a considerable vertical distance, it is relatively difficult to insert the tool for coating the waterproof layer on the seam juncture through the upper portion of the boot.

In addition, because the lower (3) is made from the same material as that of the outsole (4), which in turn is generally made from hard and abrasive resistant rubber to be able to withstand wearing, the boot is relatively heavy, thereby easily causing fatigue to the wearer.

Therefore, an object of this invention is to provide a method of making a boot, wherein the sole of the boot is connected to the lower after the lower is connected to the upper so that a waterproof layer can be provided at the seam between the upper and the lower conveniently through the uncovered lower opening of the lower.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a method of making a boot whose lower is made of a material of lighter weight than that of the outsole so that the boot is relatively light in weight and is more comfortable to wear as compared to the boot produced according to the conventional method.

Accordingly, the method of making a boot in the present invention comprises the steps of:

(a) forming a lower of unitary construction from a first waterproof polymeric material, the lower defining an enclosed toe zone and a heel zone and having a first upper end portion defining a first upper opening, and a first lower end portion defining a sole opening;
(b) forming an upper from a relatively flexible material, the upper having a second lower end portion of a size such that the first upper end portion can be smoothly seamed to the second lower end portion;
(c) joining the second lower end portion with the first upper end portion of the lower to form a seam juncture;
(d) applying a waterproof layer onto the seam juncture through the sole opening; and
(e) connecting a sole to the first lower end portion of the lower in a water-tight relationship so as to close the sole opening after step (d). A water-tight seal may be formed by providing a waterproof layer at the adjoining surfaces of the lower and the sole or by injection molding the sole in the presence of the lower to form the sole integrally with the lower.

Other features and advantages of this invention will become apparent in the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments of this invention, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective and schematic view of a boot produced according to a conventional method;
Figure 2 is a perspective and schematic view of a boot which is produced according to the method of this invention;
Figure 3 is a sectional view of the boot produced according to the method of this invention;
Figure 4 is an inverted view of the boot produced according to this invention, illustrated prior to attachment of an outsole;
Figure 5 illustrates how an inner liner assembly is inserted into the boot according to this invention;
Figure 6 is a cutaway view of the boot shown in Figure 5;
Figure 7 is a block diagram of the method of this invention;
Figure 8 is a sectional view of a modified embodiment according to this invention; and
Figure 9 is a sectional view of another modified embodiment according to this invention.

Referring to Figures 2, 3 and 4, the preferred embodiment of a boot according to this invention includes a horizontally extending outsole (50), a shell-like lower (20)disposed on the outsole (50), and an upper (10) connected to an upper section of the lower (20) so as to form the boot.

According to this invention, the method of making a boot includes the following steps:

(a) A lower of unitary construction is molded from a first waterproof polymeric material, such as PU elastomer (polyurethane) or PVC elastomer (polyvinyl chloride) or rubber. The lower (20) defines an enclosed toe zone (22A), a metatarsal zone (22B) and a heel zone (22C). The lower (20) further has a first upper end portion (22E) defining a first upper opening and a first lower end portion (22D) defining a sole opening. In the preferred embodiment, the first upper opening of the lower (20) extends from the metatarsal zone (22B) to the heel zone (22C) while the sole opening thereof extends from the toe zone (22A) to the heel zone (22C).
(b) An upper (10) is formed from a relatively flexible material, such as waterproof leather and the like

which is generally lighter compared to the lower (20). The upper (10) has a second lower end portion (10P) of a size such that the first upper end portion (22E) of the lower (20) can be smoothly seamed to the second lower end portion (10P). The upper (10) further includes two spaced eyelet tabs (10X) and a tongue (not visible) which has a lower section stitched to the lower (10) and two parallel edges stitched to the eyelet tabs (10X), thereby forming a plurality of seam junctures (11).

(c) The second lower end portion (10P) of the upper (10) is stitched to the first upper end portion (22E) of the lower (20), thereby forming a seam juncture (23).

(d) The seam juncture (23) is sealed so as to be waterproof by applying a layer of waterproof material onto the seam juncture (23) through the sole opening of the lower (20). The waterproof layer may be provided by coating the seam juncture (23) with a waterproof coating or by adhesively attaching a tape of waterproof material to the seam juncture (23) so as to cover the seam juncture (23). Note that the sole opening at the first lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20) is wide enough to permit easy access to the inner surface of the seam junctures during coating of the seam junctures (11) and (23). Thereafter, an insole (30) of non-waterproof fabric is attached by a conventional method to the first lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20). A seam (31) is formed between the insole (30) and the lower (20).

(e) An outsole (50) is molded from a second waterproof polymeric material, such as an abrasion resistant rubber, which is harder when compared to the first waterproof polymeric material. The outsole (50) has a shape corresponding to but is slightly larger than the cross-section of the first lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20.)

(f) A waterproof layer (40) of thermosetting material is provided between the adjoining surfaces of the peripheral portion (51) of the outsole (50) and the insole (30) and between the adjoining surfaces of the peripheral portion (51) and the lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20). The water proof layer (40) may be provided by applying a waterproof coating or by adhesively attaching or injecting and curing a waterproof material. A waterproof seal is thus formed between the first lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20) and the end portion (51) of the outsole (50), so that water cannot seep into the interior of the boot.

As illustrated in Figures 5 and 6, a liner (60) which has a shape conforming to that of the inner surface of the combined upper (10) and lower (20) can be stitched to a second upper end portion (10Q) of the upper (10). The liner (60) is then inserted interiorly of the boot so that the liner (60) snugly fits in the boot. When desired, a foot-like padding (80) can be removably disposed at the bottom (70) of the liner (60) .

Referring to Figure 8, in another preferred embodiment of this invention, an outsole (50') is formed by injection molding in the presence of the lower (20) so that the outsole (50') is formed in integral with the lower (20). The outsole (50') has a peripheral portion (51') to surround the lower end portion of the lower (20). The injection molding may be conducted in a mold (not shown) by first mounting the lower (20) on the mold and then injection molding the outsole (50') so that the peripheral portion (51') of the outsole (50') is integrally connected to the lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20) in a water-tight relationship.

Figure 9 illustrates a still another preferred embodiment of the present invention wherein the peripheral portion (51") of the outsole (50"), which projects upwardly, is adhesively connected to the lower end portion (22D). A waterproof coating (40") is applied at the top end of the peripheral portion (51") of the outsole (50") and the adjacent surface of the lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20) to provide a water-tight sealing.

Claims

1. A method of forming a shoe, such as a boot, characterized by the steps of:

   (a) forming a lower (20) of unitary construction from a first waterproof polymeric material, the lower defining an enclosed toe zone (22A), and a heel zone (11C) and having a first upper end portion (22E) defining a first upper opening, and a first lower end portion (22D) defining a sole opening;
   (b) forming an upper (10) from a relatively flexible material, the upper having a second lower end portion (10P) of a size such that the first upper end portion (22E) of the lower (20) can be smoothly seamed to the second lower end portion (10P);
   (c) joining the second lower end portion (10P) with the first upper end portion (22E) of the lower (20) to form a seam juncture (23);
   (d) applying a waterproof layer onto the seam juncture (23) through the sole opening; and
   (e) connecting a sole (50) to the first lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20) in a water-tight relationship to close the sole opening after step (d).

2. A method according to Claim 1, characterized in that the sole includes an insole and an outsole.

3. A method according to Claim 2, characterized in that the insole (30) is connected to the first lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20) before the outsole (50) is connected to the first lower end portion

(22D).

4. A method according to Claim 1, characterized in that the step (e) is carried out by providing a waterproof layer (40) at the adjoining surfaces of the first lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20) and the sole (50).

5. A method according to Claim 1, characterized in that the step (e) is carried out by injection molding the sole in the presence of the lower (20), thereby forming the sole in integral with and in a water-tight relationship with the first lower end portion (22D) of the lower (20).

6. A method according to Claim 1, further characterized by that the steps of:

(f) stitching, at a second upper end portion (10Q) of the upper (10), a liner (60) having a shape conforming with that of the inner surface of the combined upper and lower; and
(g) inserting the liner (60) inside to line the interior of the combined upper and lower.

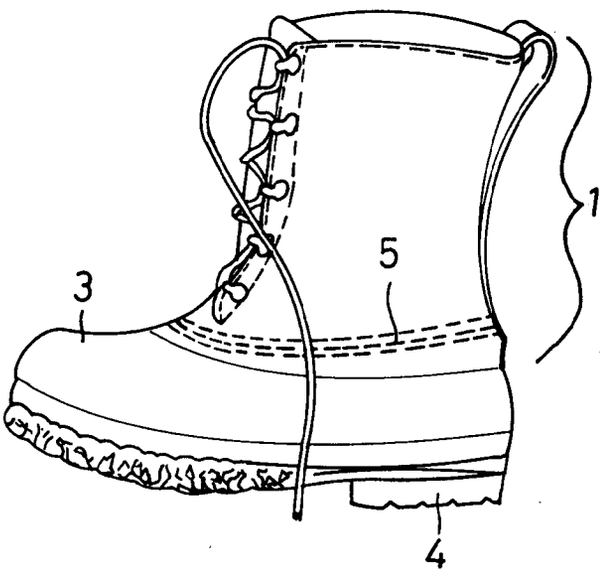

FIG. 1

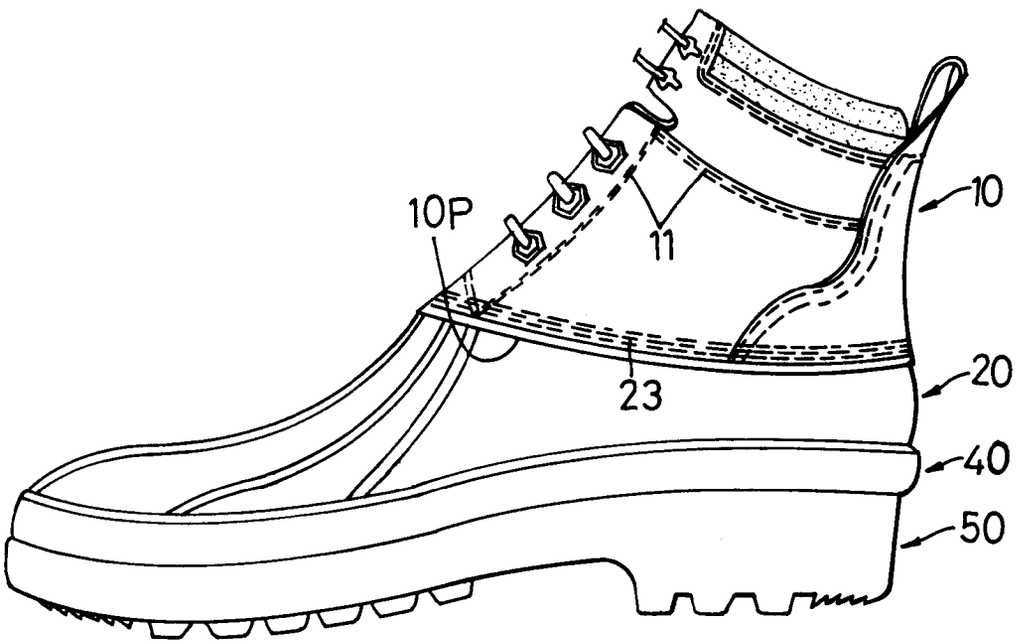

FIG. 2

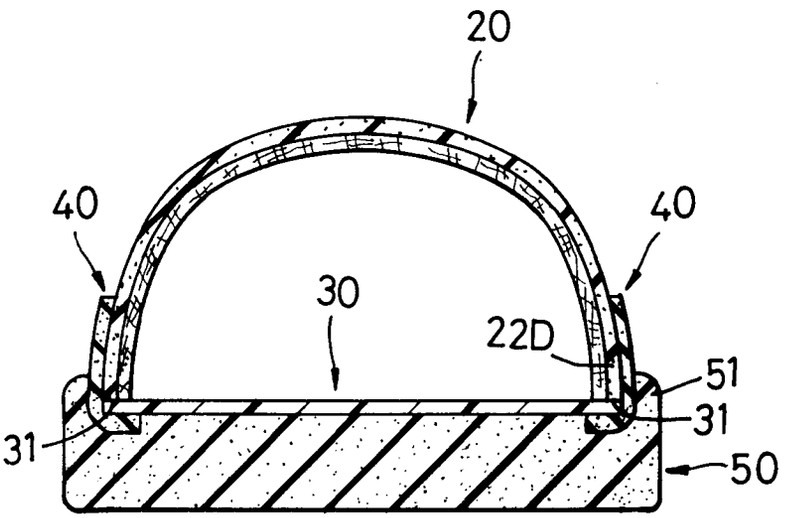

FIG. 3

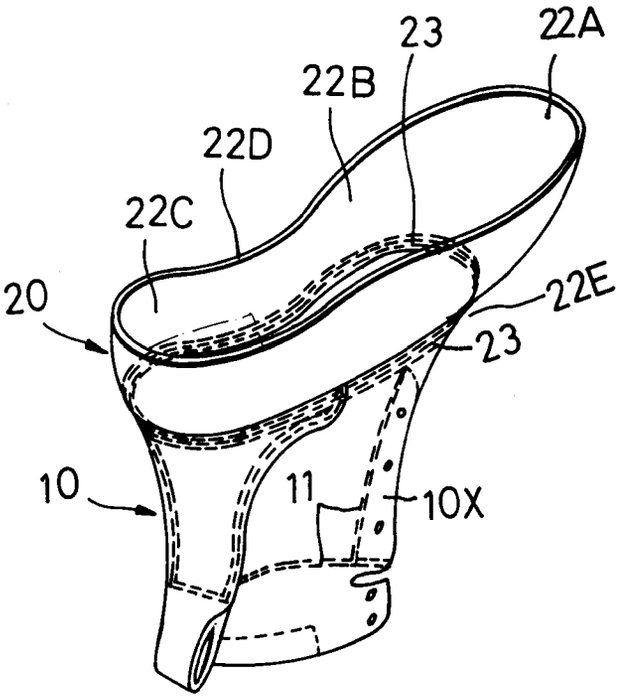

FIG. 4

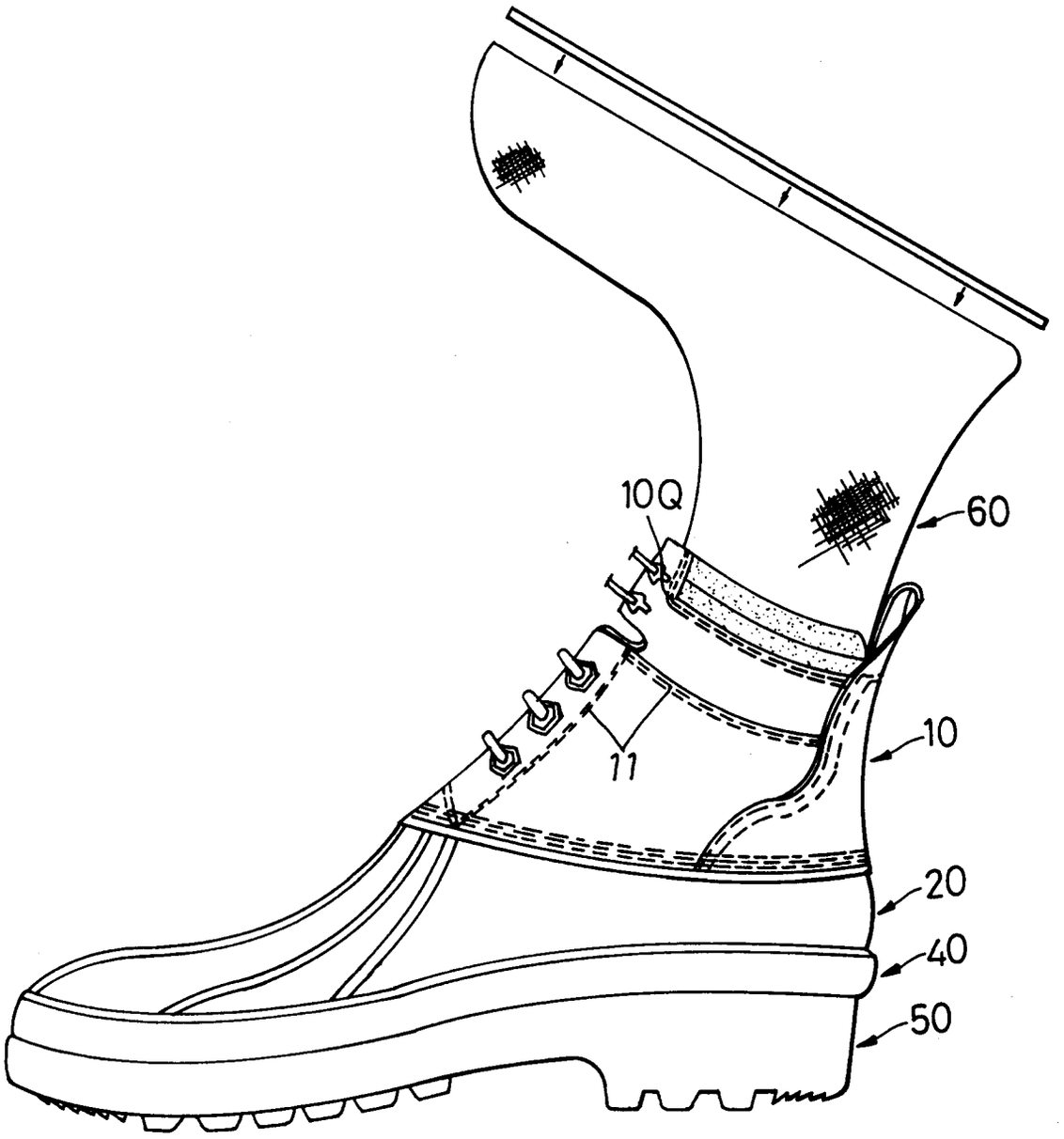

FIG. 5

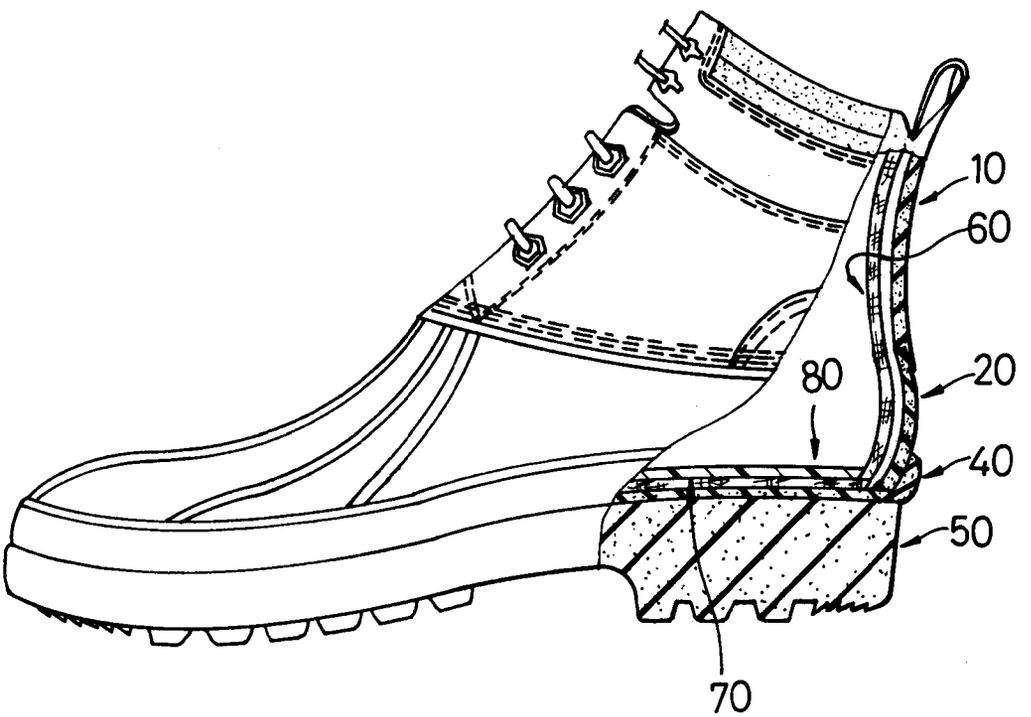

FIG. 6

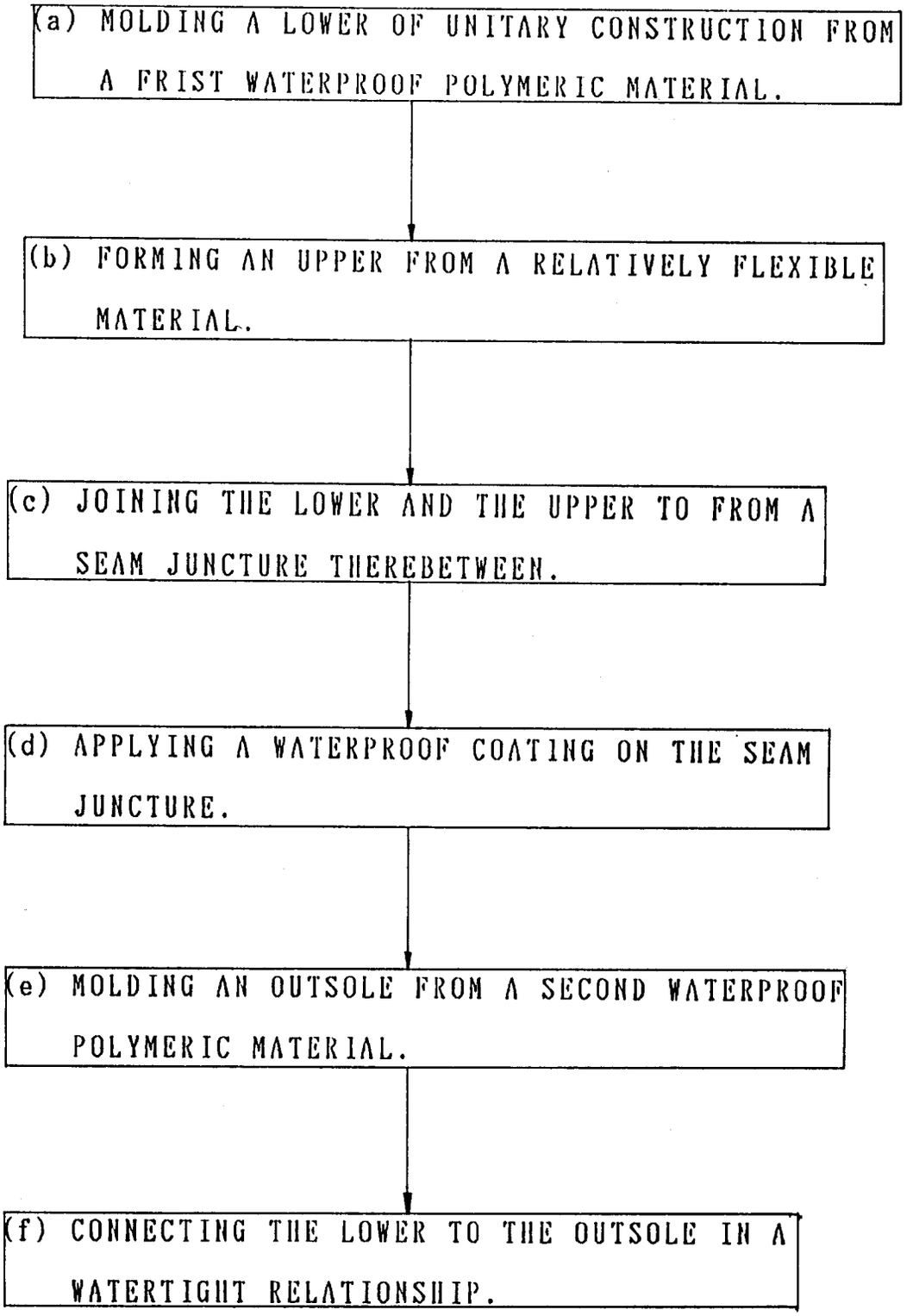
(a) MOLDING A LOWER OF UNITARY CONSTRUCTION FROM A FRIST WATERPROOF POLYMERIC MATERIAL.
(b) FORMING AN UPPER FROM A RELATIVELY FLEXIBLE MATERIAL.
(c) JOINING THE LOWER AND THE UPPER TO FROM A SEAM JUNCTURE THEREBETWEEN.
(d) APPLYING A WATERPROOF COATING ON THE SEAM JUNCTURE.
(e) MOLDING AN OUTSOLE FROM A SECOND WATERPROOF POLYMERIC MATERIAL.
(f) CONNECTING THE LOWER TO THE OUTSOLE IN A WATERTIGHT RELATIONSHIP.

FIG. 7

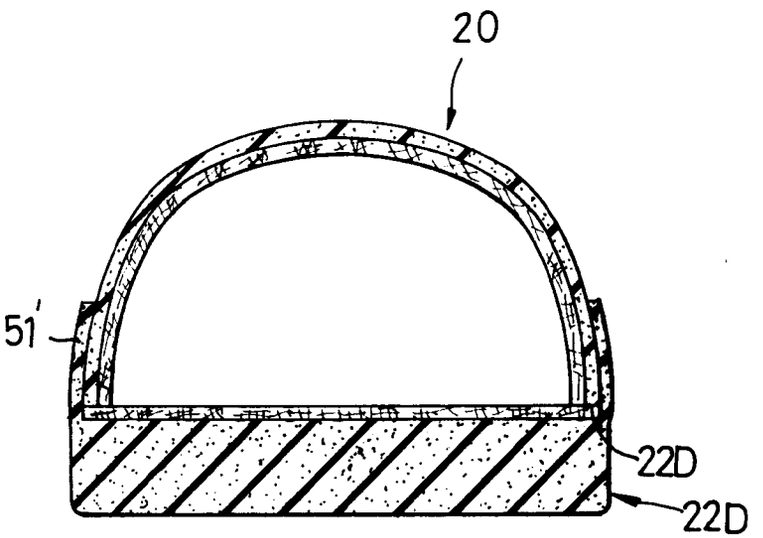

FIG. 8

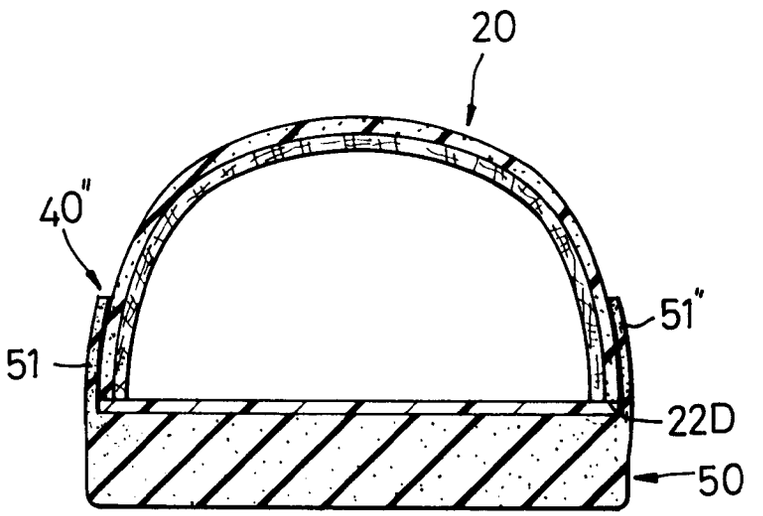

FIG. 9

European Patent Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 97 30 1758

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.6)
X	WO 90 06067 A (LEDERER GMBH ;WAGNER LOWA SCHUHFAB (DE)) 14 June 1990 * page 15, last paragraph - page 16, paragraph 3 * * page 14, paragraph 2 * * page 17, last paragraph * * figures 4,6,11 *	1-3,5	A43B7/12 A43B9/00
A	DE 462 178 C (BRAUN) * page 1, line 49 - line 61; figures 4,4A *	1	
A	FR 2 102 959 A (GORINI LOMBROSE) 7 April 1972 * the whole document *	1	
A	FR 1 466 731 A (ÉTABLISSEMENTS MARQUET SA) * the whole document *	1	
A	FR 1 192 785 A (FÉLIX RICHARD & FILS) * the whole document *	1	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
A	US 4 930 175 A (CHEN CHIN-LUNG) 5 June 1990 * abstract; figures *	6	A43B

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE	4 August 1997	Scholvinck, T

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

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