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(54) **Methods and apparatus for heat treatment and sand removal for castings**

(57) A method of processing a metal casting, comprising: Pouring a metal in molten form into a mold containing a core formed from a binder soluble in a fluid selected from water, steam, organic solvents, thermal oils and combinations thereof; retaining the metal within the mold for a time and to a temperature sufficient to at least

partially solidify the metal so as to form the casting; placing the mold in a heat treatment station for heat treating the casting within the mold with the casting aligned in a defined, indexed position; and applying a flow of the fluid in which the binder is soluble at the casting to degrade a portion of the core and to heat treat the casting.

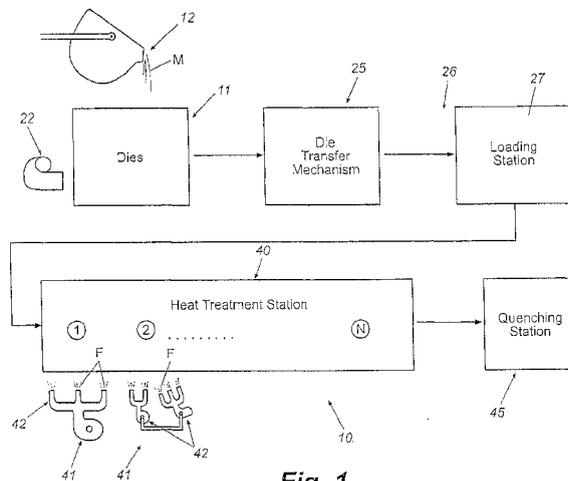


Fig. 1



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 08 16 7058

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 16 December 2009	Examiner Riba Vilanova, Marta
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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ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.

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