

Description

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to the field of electronic components and their improved mechanized assembly.

Background of the Invention

For low cost fabrication and assembly of many electronic/electrical products, it is necessary to establish an efficient mechanized method of joining electronic components onto printed wiring boards and other workpieces. Currently, there exist mechanized systems to apply electrical hardware components such as pin terminals, tabs, sockets, etc. to their appropriate workpieces. But many other components continue to rely on manual assembly. For example, the machine disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,318,964 provides an apparatus with a supply strip for inserting terminals into a substrate or workpiece. The supply strip is a continuous strip of metal pins wound on a reel. To insert a pin into a printed wiring board (PWB), a pin is separated from the rest of the strip, then pressed down into the PWB. Another machine of this type is described in U.S. Patent No. 4,807,357.

The current systems are used for assembling of pins or tabs or sockets into substrates. The pin insertion machines allow for insertion of different sizes of pins onto an apertured workpiece. The pins can vary in cross section and length. They can also be bent to 90° angles or kept straight. The machine is fed from a continuous supply of prenotched pins wound on a reel. The pins are fed, cut, formed and then inserted into the workpiece positioned below the inserter. The alignment of the insertion hole with the pin can be achieved by manually positioning the workpiece below the insertion head, or automatically by a computer-controlled X-Y locating table onto which PWB's are loaded. A similar type of machine can be used to insert sockets, or tabs or other components into PWB's. Any socket pattern can be machine inserted or can be inserted into a plastic housing for manual insertion. The above systems describe production systems to insert pins or sockets into substrates. It is accomplished by inserting one pin or one socket or one tab at a time.

Other prior art includes a system that inserts many pins, up to as many as 50 at one time. The idea is similar to the previous system in that a continuous supply of header mounted pin components are stored and fed from a reel. The difference is that the pins are first perpendicularly inserted into an extruded plastic header which is then stored on the supply reel. The endless electrical connector described in U.S. Patent No. 4,832,622 in an example of one such system. A machine automatically cuts a header with a desired, pre-set amount of pins from the supply reel. An inserter head then places the header onto a PWS. While this system increases the efficiencies of some of automated component assembly, it is still not

fully automated for other hardware components. Three examples follow which illustrate (and not limit) those components which up until now have resisted mechanized assembly.

One example of a electrical component that is currently being made individually and manually assembled is an electrical shunt connector or jumper, which is in common use today to interconnect pins to configure, for example, a printed circuit board. The plastic body of the shunt is currently individually molded, and a stamped metal conductor is inserted into the plastic body and then the completed shunt assembly is manually mounted on the PWB pins, using templates or light to properly locate the pins on which the shunt is to be assembled. The process is labor intensive, expensive and causes re-work of boards if the shunt is improperly positioned.

Another example and an important electronic component is wire end terminals. Their assembly onto wires has not been automated yet. The end terminal needs to be placed on the wire and is done so manually and individually. There is no known system that allows for the mechanized assembly of such components.

Another example is in situations where the system has inserted long rows of male metal connector pins into a PWB. Problems arise when the female connector then has to be mated. For instance, when the connector is being mated the pins might bend if the assembly is not done evenly along the axis of the pins. The problem is exacerbated when connectors are used with high pin counts. Typically, the problem of the bent pins is solved with a shrouded header that has an integrally molded pilot at either end of the header. The female connector first mates with the pilot (which is higher than the pins) and this assures that the axis of the pins and that of the connectors are properly aligned. But, the shrouded header with its integrally molded pilot is expensive, and it takes time to configure and assemble for a particular connector.

Among the common disadvantages in the assembly of the three component examples described above are the high cost and that individual handling of loose pieces are still required in the manufacture or assembly process. This is time consuming and costly. Furthermore, the expense of ordering and storing loose electronic parts is high. While the problem is particularly acute with the above described three components, there are other components whose manufacture and assembly involve similar problems.

Summary of the Invention

A principal object of the invention is a process to efficiently mechanise the manufacturing and assembling of electronic parts.

A further object is the integration of more aspects of the manufacturing and production so that the end product can be made more efficiently and less costly.

Another object is to avoid or minimise the need for

individual handling of loose pieces in the manufacture and assembly of electrical components.

Another object of the invention is to automate the manufacture and assembly of electrical shunt connectors.

Still another object of the invention is to mechanise the process of mounting insulated posts on PWBs to serve as pilots for connectors.

A further object is to fully automate the process of wire terminals and their assembly to wires.

According to one aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for mechanising the manufacture and assembly of connector parts comprising:

- (a) forming by a continuous moulding process an elongate strip of individual plastic component parts interconnected by severable plastic regions;
- (b) winding the elongate strip onto a first reel;
- (c) mounting the first reel onto an assembly machine;
- (d) feeding the elongate strip from the first reel to an insertion head of the assembly machine, so that the insertion head receives the leading one of the individual plastics component parts;
- (e) controlling the insertion head of the assembly machine to insert a connector part into the said leading one plastics component part;
- (f) subsequently controlling the assembly machine to sever the said leading one component part from the elongate strip; and
- (g) repeating steps (e) and (f) to insert and sever the next leading plastics component part from the elongate strip.

According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for mechanising the manufacture and assembly of insulated posts onto a printed circuit board comprising the steps:

- (a) forming by a continuous molding process an elongated strip of individual plastic insulated posts having a non-uniform cross-section and a slotted bottom and interconnected by severable plastic regions,
- (b) winding onto a reel the continuous strip formed by step (a),
- (c) providing a machine having a table for supporting a printed circuit board having holes for receiving an insulated post and a head for inserting insulating posts,
- (d) mounting the reel of step (b) on the machine and feeding the continuous strip from the reel to the head,
- (e) controlling the machine to provide the leading insulating post on the strip to the head while positioning the table so that a printed circuit board on the table is located under the head in a position to receive at a first selected hole the insulated post,

(f) operating the machine to cut-off along the severable region the leading insulated post from the strip and then to insert the cut-off post into the printed circuit board at the selected hole, said insertion including pushing the post bottom-first into and through the circuit board hole, and

(g) repeating steps (e) and (f) to sever and insert the next leading insulating post on the strip into a second selected hole spaced from the first hole on the printed circuit board.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there is provided a continuous strip of plastic moulded bodies each having an internal cavity or each having a hole at either end with one end being tapered, adjacent plastics moulded bodies being connected to one another by severable plastic pieces, a metal connector located in the cavities of each of the moulded bodies in the case where the bodies are formed with an internal cavity and said metal connector comprising a metal spring clip for receiving and electrically connecting adjacent pins when inserted therein, a hollow metal wire connector located in each of the cavities in the case where the moulded bodies are formed having a hole at either end and said metal wire connector comprising a widened hollow part configured to fit within the moulded body and an integral hollow elongated narrowed part extending through the hole at the tapered end of the moulded body.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there is provided a continuous strip of plastic moulded bodies connected to one another by severable plastics pieces, each of said moulded bodies comprising a pilot post that is bevelled at both ends, bifurcated at one end, and having an enlarged circumference near its bevelled end.

Other aspects of the invention relate to component parts, assemblies and sub-assemblies and reels of such parts produced as intermediate or end products in the carrying out of the process of the invention.

The following describes a process which involves molding an endless line of plastic parts. Where the parts have complex shapes, as in the above-described three components, a continuous injection molding process is preferably employed. The endless line of parts is wound on a reel. Once in reel form, then the known automatic machines can then be directly employed or readily modified to process the reeled parts at a high production rate. It may require several machine passes before the component or its assembly onto a workpiece is completed. Thus the reeled parts can be fed to a machine which punches holes, inserts metal parts, or performs other secondary operations on the plastic pieces, and then re-reels the worked pieces. Another pass through an insertion machine can sever one or more of the parts as needed from the supply reel and mount the parts onto the appropriate workpiece. In this manner, more of the production process of the electronic components can be automated.

A feature of the process is the initial formation of a

continuous molded product on a reel. The reel can be used to hold virtually any number of plastic parts in a variety of shapes needed for a particular application. The reel is then mounted on one of the kinds of assembly, insertion or crimping machines previously described and supplies an endless line of parts that can be added to or inserted on another part aligned by the machine. Manual handling then reduces to transport of supply reel from machine to machine or to a customer provided with a similar applicator machine employing such reels for automatic assembly of the reeled components onto a PWB. Thus, the invention provides flexibility and versatility in the variety and the amount of parts to be manufactured and assembled onto their corresponding workpieces.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, a shunt connector is manufactured by injection molding a continuous line of plastic body parts and winding on a first reel. The first reel is mounted on one of the automatic assembly machines which, from a supply of metal parts inserts the metal contact spring clip into each body part as it passes through the machine and is re-reeled onto a second reel. The second reel is placed on another insertion machine which then severs a plastic body part with its metal contact spring clip from the endless supply and mounts it on pin terminals of a PCB accurately positioned below.

In accordance with another preferred embodiment of the invention, wire and terminals can be manufactured and crimped to lead wires. As before, an endless line of plastic parts are made by a molding process and wound on a reel. They are then fed to an assembly machine that in a secondary operation inserts the metal tube connector, and after supplying a wire, crimps the metal connector into place.

In accordance with a third preferred embodiment of the invention, a continuous row of plastic posts is molded, wound onto a reel, and then inserted in a PWB by the previously described inserter machine from a reel supply.

It is thus evident that a variety of electronic components can be efficiently manufactured and assembled by use of the reel supply of an endless line of plastic molded parts subsequently worked and reworked in reel-supplied, automated, insertion and assembly machines to minimise the handling of loose pieces.

The process generally entails: (1) molding, (2) reeling, (3) secondary operations of assembly when required and re-reeling, (4) insertion. The assembly, insertion and crimping machines are already known and used in the art. Thus, this aspect of the invention relates to a process that efficiently mechanises the manufacturing, assembly and insertion of electrical components achieved by integrating the supply reels of continuous strips of electronic component parts. This minimises handling, expense and time of manufacturing and assembly of electronic components.

The invention will now be described in detail with respect to several preferred embodiments with reference

to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Fig. 1 schematically illustrates an injection molding process for the plastic housing of a shunt;

Fig. 2 is a cross-section of the mold of Fig. 1 taken along the line 2-2;

Fig. 3 is a cross-section of the mold of Fig. 2 taken along the line 3-3, and also showing a part of the injection gun for injecting hot plastic into the side of the mold;

Fig. 4 shows a supply reel of the continuous plastic housing parts of shunts feeding into a metal spring clip insertion machine, to receive a metal insert, and then being rewound on another supply reel after receiving the metal insert;

Fig. 5 is a cross-section along the line 5-5 of the shunt housing of Fig. 4 showing how the metal connector piece is inserted into the housing;

Fig. 6 is a cross-section of a feed chute full of metal connectors of the machine of Fig. 4 as well as a metal connector being inserted into the plastic housing of the shunt;

Fig. 7 shows a supply reel of shunts being inserted by a second machine onto a PWB on its X-Y table;

Fig. 8 is a schematic cross-section showing how the shunt fits onto terminals on the PWB;

Fig. 9 is a view similar to Fig. 1 showing an injection molding process for a wire end terminal;

Fig. 10 is a cross-section along the line 10-10 of Fig. 9 of the mold for the plastic housing part of the wire end terminal;

Fig. 11 is a cross-section along the line 11-11 of Fig. 10, also showing an injection gun going into the side of the mold;

Fig. 12 is a schematic view of a supply reel of the housing part of the wire end terminal going through an assembly machine and receiving the hollow metal connector part, and then being rewound onto another supply reel;

Fig. 13 is a schematic view of a chute on the machine of Fig. 12 with an endless hollow connector being cut and inserted into the plastic housing of the wire end terminal;

Fig. 14 schematically illustrates a supply reel of wire and terminals being fed into a machine for assembly onto wire pieces;

Fig. 15 schematically illustrates the wire end terminal being crimped onto the wire piece;

Fig. 16 is a magnified view of the wire piece being assembled with the wire end terminal and then being cut from the supply strip;

Fig. 17 shows the end product made by the process, illustrated in Figs. 9-16, namely, a wire piece with wire end terminals on both ends.

Fig. 18 is a view similar to Fig. 1 showing an injection molding process for a plastic pilot post;

Fig. 19 is a cross-section along the line 19-19 of Fig. 18 of the mold for the pilot post;

Fig. 20 is a cross-section along the line 20-20 of Fig. 19 also showing an injection gun going into the side of the mold;

Fig. 21 is a schematic view of a supply reel of plastic pilot post going through an insertion machine and being inserted onto a PWB on its X-Y table;

Fig. 22 shows the cross-section of the line 22 in Fig. 21, as well as the end product made by the process illustrated in Figs. 18-21 namely, a pilot plastic post inserted onto a board.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments

To show the environment of the invention, reference is first made to Fig. 1 which illustrates the starting point of the invention, which is an injection molding process. One example is the injection molding process disclosed in Patent No. 4,832,622, which is incorporated herein by reference. The preheating, plasticising and molding is all done by the same machine. Granules of plastic 10 are fed into an injection cylinder 19 through a hopper opening 12. The granules are then heated to a molten state 13 in the cylinder 19 by a heating jacket 14. The molten plastic is then injected by a ram 15 into mold 16 as shown in Fig. 1.

The mold 16 makes a discrete amount of plastic parts 17, all interconnected by thin plastic severable strips or webs 18. The webs 18 are also formed during the molding process. At the end of each completed strip of parts and webs, there is an end extension or web 27, the free end of which is placed back into the mold so that the next strip of parts is molded and fused onto it. This process continues after each molding step. In this fashion, an endless or continuous elongated strip of plastic parts, held together by the webs 18, can be manufactured. All of the plastic parts are connected together by the thin plastic severable pieces, or webs, except for the first and last part which have only one connecting side.

Figs. 1-3 show the manufacture of the shunt housing 17. The shunt housings 17 are connected to one another by webs 18 as shown in Fig. 3. As each strip of parts is made, it is connected to the next strip as previously described by means of the web 18. The continuous strip of shunt housing parts 17 is then wound onto a reel 20 and fed into an assembly machine which inserts a metal spring clip 25 and rewinds the continuous shunt strip now with the metal inserts back onto another reel 21. This is shown in Fig. 4. Machines of the type described have been previously disclosed and are already on the market. Only the insertion head 23 for the shaped metal spring clips is shown in Fig. 4.

The metal spring clips 25 are supplied from a reel of continuous parts connected together by web pieces. The secondary operation of the assembly machine detaches the spring clip from its strip fed along chute 24 and inserts it into the shunt housing by a ram. Fig. 5 shows a metal spring clip 25 being inserted into a plastic shunt housing 17 on the strip. The spring clip is locked into the plastic

housing by a step up leak 29 in the cavity of the housing. The step up lock 29 allows the metal insert to be easily pushed in but then difficult to remove past the step in the shunt housing. The completed shunt (with its spring clip) is wound on reel 21. For simplicity, Fig. 6 shows the spring clips 25 fed as discrete items along chute 24. But, as previously described, as is known, the spring clips can be shaped by stamping into a continuous strip, reeled, and then fed to the assembly machine of Fig. 4 from a reel. Afterwards, the reel 21 is flipped over so that the open end of the shunt piece is facing downward ready for insertion on a terminal on a PCB. The flipped reel 21' is then mounted to another machine 30 which separates the individual shunt 17 from its strip and inserts it onto a predetermined position on pin terminals of a PCB. Fig. 7 shows the shunt supply reel 21' feeding one by one the strip of shunts into the insertion head 31 of the machine to be inserted onto a PCB board 32. Fig. 7 also shows some finished shunts (now referenced 34) already inserted onto the pin terminals 35 on the PCB on an X-Y table 36 of the machine which has been positioned under the inserter head 31. Fig. 8 shows the X-Y table 36 and the PCB 32 with a shunt 34 inserted on terminals 35 at the left. Fig. 8 also illustrates a new shunt 34 in the inserter head 31 being cut along the web 18 by shear tool 37 from the continuous shunt strip and about to be inserted on the underlying terminals 35 on the PCB 32 by means of ram 38.

Figs. 9-11 show the manufacture of the plastic housing, or insulator sleeve, part of the wire end terminal. The injection molding process previously described is used to manufacture the tapered plastic insulator of the wire end terminal 17'. The mold 16' makes a discrete amount of plastic parts 17' all interconnected by thin, severable plastic strips or webs 18'. At the end of the strip of parts there is a web extension 27' that is put in the subsequent made mold and fused to the next strip, as also previously described. Fig. 12 shows the continuous strip of plastic parts wound on a reel 40 and fed into an assembly machine head 42. As a secondary operation, the assembly machine inserts a flared hollow metal tube into the insulator sleeve to make the wire end terminal. One way to make this wire end terminal is to have loose flared hollow tube parts fed into the assembly machine by way of a hopper and then by an escapement mechanism, to line up the parts which are then fed one by one to the assembly head to be inserted into the insulated plastic part by a ram. Another way is shown in Figs. 12 and 13. A hollow piece of wire tube 43' is cut 37' from a tubular supply on a reel 39 and widened, or flared, at one end as it is inserted into the tapered part 28 of the plastic housing part 17'. The wire end terminal pieces (flared hollow wire pieces 43' inserted into tapered plastic parts 17') are now wound onto another supply reel 41. Fig. 13 shows chute 46 with the shear cutting tool 37' used to cut the hollow wire piece 43' from the endless strip of hollow wire 43. The hollow wire 43 is fed down the chute 46, cut with the shear cutting tool 37' and inserted into the tapered plastic

housing part 17'. The hollow metal tube is flared at the end to fasten tightly into the insulating sleeve. The wire end terminal parts, including the tapered housing part 17' with the inserted flared hollow metal wire tube 43', connected together by webs 18', are wound onto supply reel 41.

Reel 41 is then mounted onto another insertion or crimping machine that inserts insulated wire pieces 47 into the wire end terminals 17'. The insulated wire pieces are fed to the machine after having the insulation stripped off their ends. The stripped lead wire 45 is then inserted and crimped within the wire end terminal piece. One method of achieving this is to have the insulated wires 47 already stripped at its ends 45 and fed down a chute 44 to the insertion head. Fig. 14 shows the insulated wire 47 being vertically fed down a chute 44 into the insertion head of the machine 49. The bare wire 45 at the end of the insulated wire is inserted into the wire end terminator part and crimped into place as depicted in Fig. 15. The crimping tool 48 crimps the insulated wire 47, the exposed wire 45 inside of the plastic part of the wire end terminal 17', as well as the hollow metal wire part 49' of the wire end terminal. The entire workpiece is then cut from the supply strip on reel 41 by shearing tool 37" as shown in Fig. 16. Fig. 17 shows the one of the possible end products of the just previously described process: an insulated wire piece 47 crimped into wire end terminals 17' and 43'.

Instead of the process illustrated in Figs. 14 and 15, the machine can readily combine a known automatic wire stripper and known crimper. In this case, a continuous length of wire fed from a reel would have its leading end stripped, cut to length, and its trailing edge stripped and then crimped onto the terminal end as depicted in the drawings. As a further alternative, an operator can manually insert the stripped wires into each terminal as they are fed in succession to the crimping head 49.

Figs. 18-20 shows the injection molding process for pilot plastic posts. The injection molding process has been previously described. The mold for the pilot plastic post shows the posts each having bevelled ends 50, 50'. The base part 51 is enlarged and provided with a broad plastic band 52 spaced from the enlargement 51. Fig. 18 and Fig. 22 also show a slit 55 formed in the bottom part of the post. The slit 55 extends from the center band 32 through the enlarged part 51 and out the bottom. The slit bifurcates the base section of the post. These features are made in the same injection molding process as previously described. The mold also makes a discrete amount of the plastic parts 17", all connected to the next plastic part by a thin plastic severable strip or web 18". The last web 27" is the extension web, used for fusion with the subsequent mold to make a continuous strip. This process has been previously described. The continuous strip of parts is then wound on a supply reel 53 and fed to an insertion head 31' of an insertion machine which cuts and inserts the individual post parts into aligned holes 54 in the PCB board 32'. Note the PCB

board sits raised above the X-Y table 36 so that the posts 17" can go through the PCB board and lock into place. Fig. 22 shows a shear tool 37" cutting an individual pilot post 17" from its continuous supply strip and being pushed onto a PCB 32' by a ram 38'. Fig. 22 also shows how the feature parts of the pilot plastic posts are used. The bevelled ends 50 at the bottom are used to easily align the posts while inserting. The posts are inserted in the one workpiece with the enlarged part 51 pushed through the hole 54, thus locking the plastic part 17" in place. The slit 55 in the pieces are used to form a bifurcated end which can be contracted while inserting and then will expand to keep the enlarged part locked into place. The wider band 52 acts as a stop to prevent the post from being pushed all the way through the workpiece or PCB 32'. The other bevelled end 50' protrudes above the other electronic workpieces on the PCB.

Subsequently, not shown, a header with multiple metal pins would be mounted between the two posts 17" shown in Fig. 21. The two posts would then act to guide assembly of a female connector onto the pins to prevent bending, as earlier described. Alternatively, the metal pins could be separately inserted into the PCB between the pilot posts 17".

While the invention has been described and illustrated in connection with preferred embodiments, many variations and modifications as will be evident to those skilled in this art may be made therein without departing from the invention, and the invention as set forth in the appended claims is thus not to be limited to the precise details of construction set forth above as such variations and modifications are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims.

Claims

1. A method for mechanising the manufacture and assembly of connector parts comprising:

- (a) forming by a continuous moulding process an elongate strip of individual plastic component parts (17, 17') each having an internal cavity or hole, interconnected by severable plastic regions (18, 18');
- (b) winding the elongate strip onto a first reel (20, 40);
- (c) mounting the first reel (20, 40) onto an assembly machine;
- (d) feeding the elongate strip from the first reel (20, 40) to an insertion head (23, 42) of the assembly machine, so that the insertion head receives the leading one of the individual plastics component parts;
- (e) controlling the insertion head of the assembly machine to insert a connector part (25, 43) into the said leading one plastics component part;

housing part 17'. The hollow metal tube is flared at the end to fasten tightly into the insulating sleeve. The wire end terminal parts, including the tapered housing part 17' with the inserted flared hollow metal wire tube 43', connected together by webs 18', are wound onto supply reel 41.

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While the invention has been described and illustrated in connection with preferred embodiments, many variations and modifications as will be evident to those skilled in this art may be made therein without departing from the invention, and the invention as set forth in the appended claims is thus not to be limited to the precise details of construction set forth above as such variations and modifications are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims.

Claims

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- (c) mounting the first reel (20, 40) onto an assembly machine;
- (d) feeding the elongate strip from the first reel (20, 40) to an insertion head (23, 42) of the assembly machine, so that the insertion head receives the leading one of the individual plastics component parts;
- (e) controlling the insertion head of the assembly machine to insert a connector part (25, 43) into the said leading one plastics component part;



- (f) subsequently controlling the assembly machine to sever the said leading one component part from the elongate strip;
- (g) repeating steps (e) and (f) to insert and sever the next leading plastics component part from the elongate strip.
2. A method for mechanising the manufacture and assembly of connector parts according to claim 1, comprising providing the assembly machine with a support (36) for supporting a printed circuit board (32) having pins (35) or holes for receiving the plastics component parts; controlling the assembly machine to position the support to locate a printed circuit board under the insertion head (23,42), whereby in a case where the leading plastics component part is to be located onto a printed circuit board, the plastics component part can be located onto a selected location on the printed circuit board, and subsequent plastics component parts can be located onto a different selected location or onto a selected location of another printed circuit board.
 3. A method for mechanising the manufacture and assembly of connector parts according to claim 1, comprising forming a cavity in each of the individual plastics component parts (17); providing the assembly machine with means for holding a supply of spring metal wire pieces (25), which pieces constitute the connector parts; controlling the insertion head (23) of the assembly machine to insert into each cavity of the plastics component parts one of the spring metal wire pieces (25) to form a second elongate strip of shunt connectors; winding the second elongate strip onto a second reel (21'); providing the assembly machine with an inserting machine (30) having a support (36) for supporting a printed circuit board (32) having pins (35) for receiving a shunt connector (34), and having an insertion head (31) for inserting the shunt connectors onto the printed circuit board; mounting the second reel (21') onto the inserting machine (30) and feeding the second elongate strip from the second reel to the insertion head (31) of the inserting machine (30); controlling the inserting machine (30) to provide the leading shunt connector (17) on the second elongate strip to the insertion head (31) while positioning the support (36) so that a printed circuit board (32) on the support is located under the insertion head (31) in a position to receive at selected pin locations the shunt connector (17); operating the inserting machine (30) to sever the leading shunt connector from the second elongate strip and then to insert the severed shunt connector (34) onto the printed circuit board pins (35) at the selected location; and repeating the controlling of the inserting machine (30) to provide the leading shunt connector and the operating of the inserting machine to sever in order to sever and insert the next leading shunt connector on the second elongate strip onto pins (35) at a second selected location on the printed circuit board (32) or onto pins at a selected location on another printed circuit board.
 4. A method for mechanising the manufacture and assembly of connector parts according to claim 1, comprising forming by the continuous moulding process the individual plastic component parts (17') in the form of bottom-tapered (28) holding sleeves; providing the assembly machine with an insertion part (42) and an assembly part (48); providing the insertion part (42) with a supply of formed hollow metal tubes having a tapered top and an insertion head (42); inserting individual hollow tubes into each sleeve (17') such that the tubes tapered top seats in the tapered bottom of the hollow sleeve to form a second elongate strip of insulated termination conductors; winding onto a second reel (41) the second elongate strip; providing the assembly part (48) with a head (48) for assembling wire terminals onto stripped wire end; mounting the second reel (41) on the assembly part (48) and feeding the second elongate strip from the reel (41) to the head (48); controlling the assembly part (48) to provide the leading connector on the strip to the head (48); subsequently controlling the machine to sever the leading connector parts from the second elongate strip while, inserting the stripped wire end into the hollow tube via the hollow sleeve and assembling the tube and sleeve to secure the connector to the wire; repeating steps to sever the next leading connector on the strip for receiving another stripped wire end.
 5. A method according to claim 4, wherein the assembly part (48) comprises a head (48) for crimping the wire terminals onto stripped wire ends.
 6. A method for mechanizing the manufacture and assembly of insulated posts (17'') onto a printed circuit board (32'') comprising the steps:
 - (a) forming by a continuous molding process an elongated Strip of individual plastic insulated posts (17'') having a non-uniform cross-section and a slotted bottom (30) and interconnected by severable plastic regions (18''),
 - (b) winding onto a reel (53) the continuous strip formed by step (a),
 - (c) providing an insertion machine (30') having a table (36) for supporting a printed circuit board (32'') having holes (54) for receiving an insulated post (17'') and a head (31') for inserting insulating posts (17''),
 - (d) mounting the reel (53) of step (b) on the insertion machine (30') and feeding the continuous strip from the reel (53) to the head (31'),



- (e) controlling the machine to provide the leading insulating post (17") on the strip to the head (31') while positioning the table (36) so that a printed circuit board on the table (36) is located under the head (31') in a position to receive at a first selected hole (54) the insulated post (17").
- (f) operating the machine to cut-off along the severable region the leading insulated post from the strip and then to insert the cut-off post into the printed circuit board (32) at the selected hole, said insertion including pushing the post bottom-first into and through the circuit board hole,
- (g) repeating steps (e) and (f) to sever and insert the next leading insulating post on the strip into a second selected hole spaced from the first hole on the printed circuit board.
7. A continuous strip of plastic moulded bodies (17, 17') each having an internal cavity or each having a hole at either end with one end (28) being tapered, adjacent plastics moulded bodies being connected to one another by severable plastic pieces (18, 18'), a metal connector (25) located in the cavities of each of the moulded bodies (17) in the case where the bodies are formed with an internal cavity and said metal connector (25) comprising a metal spring clip for receiving and electrically connecting adjacent pins (35) on terminals of a printed wiring board when inserted therein, a hollow metal wire connector (43') located in each of the cavities in the case where the moulded bodies (17') are formed having a hole at either end and said metal wire connector comprising a widened hollow part configured to fit within the moulded body and an integral hollow elongated hollow elongated narrow part extending through the hole at the tapered end of the moulded body.
8. A continuous strip of plastic moulded bodies (17") connected to one another by severable plastics pieces (18"), each of said moulded bodies comprising a pilot post that is bevelled at both ends; bifurcated at one end, and having an enlarged circumference near its bifurcated end.
9. The combination of a continuous strip according to claim 7 or 8 with a supply reel on which said continuous strip is wound.

Patentansprüche

1. Verfahren zum Mechanisieren der Herstellung und Montage von Verbindungselementteilen mit den Schritten:

(a) Herstellen eines langgestreckten Streifen einzelner Kunststoffkomponententeile (17, 17')

mittels eines kontinuierlichen Formspritzverfahrens, die durch trennbare Kunststoffbereiche (18, 18') miteinander verbunden sind;

(b) Aufwickeln des langgestreckten Streifen auf eine erste Rolle (20, 40);

(c) Montieren der ersten Rolle (20, 40) auf eine Montagemaschine;

(d) Zuführen des langgestreckten Streifens von der ersten Rolle (20, 40) an einen Einsetzkopf (23, 42) der Montagemaschine, so daß der Einsetzkopf das Vordere der einzelnen Kunststoffkomponententeile aufnimmt;

(e) Steuern des Einsetzkopfes der Montagemaschine, um ein Verbindungselementteil (25, 43) in das Vordere der Kunststoffkomponententeile einzusetzen;

(f) anschließendes Steuern der Montagemaschine, um das vordere Kunststoffkomponententeil von dem langgestreckten Streifen abzutrennen;

(g) Wiederholen der Schritte (e) und (f), um das nächste Kunststoffkomponententeil einzusetzen und von dem langgestreckten Streifen abzutrennen;

2. Verfahren zum Mechanisieren der Herstellung und Montage von Verbindungselementteilen nach Anspruch 1, welches umfaßt: Bereitstellen der Montagemaschine mit einer Lagerungseinrichtung (36) für die Lagerung einer Leiterplatte (32) mit Stiften (35) oder Öffnungen für die Aufnahme der Kunststoffkomponententeile; Steuern der Montagemaschine um die Lagerungseinrichtung so zu positionieren, daß eine Leiterplatte unter dem Einsetzkopf (23, 34) platziert wird, wodurch in einem Falle, bei dem das vordere Kunststoffkomponententeil auf einer Leiterplatte zu platzieren ist, das Kunststoffkomponententeil an eine gewählte Stelle auf der Leiterplatte platziert werden kann und nachfolgende Kunststoffkomponententeile an eine andere gewählte Stelle oder auf eine gewählte Stelle einer anderen Leiterplatte platziert werden können.

3. Verfahren zum Mechanisieren der Herstellung und Montage von Verbindungselementteilen nach Anspruch 1, welches umfaßt: Ausbilden eines Hohlraums in jedem der einzelnen Kunststoffkomponententeile (17); Bereitstellen der Montagemaschine mit einer Einrichtung zum Lagern einer Versorgungseinrichtung für Federmetall-Drahtstücke (25), welche die Verbindungselementteile bilden; Steuern des Einsetzkopfes (32) der Montagemaschine, um in jeden Hohlraum der Kunststoffkomponententeile eines der Federmetall-Drahtstücke (25) einzusetzen, um einen zweiten langgestreckten Streifen von Schaltbrückenverbindungselementen zu erzeugen; Aufwickeln des zweiten langgestreckten Streifens auf eine zweite Rolle (21'); Bereitstellen der



Montagemaschine mit einer Aufsetzmaschine (30), die eine Lagerungseinrichtung (36) für die Lagerung einer Leiterplatte (32) mit Stiften (35) für die Aufnahme eines Schaltbrückenverbindungselements (34) aufweist und einen Aufsetzkopf (31) für das Aufsetzen der Schaltbrückenverbindungselemente auf die Leiterplatte aufweist; Montieren der zweiten Rolle (21') auf die Aufsetzmaschine (30) und Zuführen des zweiten langgestreckten Streifens von der zweiten Rolle zu dem Aufsetzkopf (31) der Aufsetzmaschine (30); Steuern der Aufsetzmaschine (30), um das vordere Schaltbrückenverbindungselement (17) auf dem zweiten langgestreckten Streifen an den Aufsetzkopf (31) zu liefern, während die Lagerungseinrichtung so positioniert wird, daß eine Leiterplatte (32) auf der Lagerungseinrichtung unter dem Aufsetzkopf (31) in einer Position plaziert wird, um an gewählten Stiftestellen das Schaltbrückenverbindungselement (17) aufzunehmen; Betreiben der Aufsetzmaschine (30), um das vordere Schaltbrückenverbindungselement von dem zweiten langgestreckten Streifen abzutrennen und dann das abgetrennte Schaltbrückenverbindungselement (34) auf die Leiterplattenstifte (35) an der gewählten Stelle aufzustecken; und Wiederholen der Steuerung der Aufsetzmaschine (30) zum Vorbereiten des vorderen Schaltbrückenverbindungselements und des Schneidebetriebs der Einsetzmaschine, um das nächste vordere Schaltbrückenverbindungselement auf dem zweiten langgestreckten Streifen abzuschneiden und auf Stifte (35) an einer zweiten gewählten Stelle auf der Leiterplatte (32) oder auf Stifte an einer gewählten Stelle einer anderen Leiterplatte aufzustecken.

4. Verfahren zum Mechanisieren der Herstellung und Montage von Verbindungselementteilen nach Anspruch 1, welches umfaßt: Herstellen der einzelnen Kunststoffkomponententeile (17') durch ein kontinuierliches Formspritzverfahren in der Form am Boden kegelliger Halterungshülsen (28); Bereitstellen der Einsetzmaschine mit einem Einsetzabschnitt (42) und einem Montageabschnitt (48); Bereitstellen des Einsetzabschnittes (42) mit einem Vorrat geformter hohler Metallröhrchen mit einem kegelligen Oberteil und eines Einsetzkopfes (42); Einsetzen einzelner hohler Röhrchen in jede Hülse (17') in der Weise, daß das kegellige Röhrchenoberteil in dem kegelligen Unterteil der hohlen Hülse sitzt, um einen zweiten langgestreckten Streifen isolierter Abschlußleiter zu erzeugen; Aufwickeln des zweiten langgestreckten Streifens auf eine zweite Rolle (41); Bereitstellen des Montageabschnittes (48) mit einem Kopf (48) zum Montieren der Drahtendanschlußelemente auf abisolierte Drahtenden; Montieren der zweiten Rolle (41) auf den Montageabschnitt (48) und Zuführen des zweiten langgestreckten Streifens von der Rolle (41) zu dem Kopf (48); Steu-

ern des Montageabschnittes (48), um das vordere Verbindungselement an dem Streifen dem Kopf (48) zuzuführen; anschließendes Steuern der Maschine, um die vorderen Verbindungselementteile von dem zweiten langgestreckten Streifen abzutrennen, während das abisolierte Drahtende in das hohle Röhrchen über die hohle Hülse eingesteckt wird und das Röhrchen und die Hülse zusammengefügt werden, um das Verbindungselement auf dem Draht zu befestigen; Wiederholen von Schritten, um das nächste vordere Verbindungselement an dem Streifen für die Aufnahme eines weiteren abisolierten Drahtendes abzuschneiden.

5. Verfahren nach Anspruch 4, wobei der Montageabschnitt (48) einen Kopf (48) zum Crimpen der Drahtendanschlußelemente auf abisolierte Drahtenden aufweist.

6. Verfahren zum Mechanisieren der Herstellung und Montage von isolierten Pfosten (17'') auf eine Leiterplatte mit den Schritten:

(a) Herstellen eines langgestreckten Streifen einzelner isolierter Pfosten (17'') mittels eines kontinuierlichen Formspritzverfahrens, die einen nicht gleichförmigen Querschnitt und ein geschlitztes Unterteil (50) aufweisen und die durch trennbare Kunststoffbereiche (18'') miteinander verbunden sind, aufweisen;

(b) Aufwickeln des durch den Schritt (a) hergestellten zusammenhängenden Streifens auf eine Rolle (53);

(c) Bereitstellen einer Einsetzmaschine (30') mit einem Tisch (36) für die Lagerung einer Leiterplatte (32') mit Öffnungen (54) für die Aufnahme eines isolierten Pfostens (17'') und mit einem Kopf (31') zum Einsetzen der isolierten Pfosten (17'');

(d) Montieren der Rolle (53) von Schritt (b) auf die Einsetzmaschine (30') und Zuführen des zusammenhängenden Streifens von der Rolle (53) zu dem Kopf (31');

(e) Steuern der Maschine, um den vorderen isolierten Pfosten (17'') auf dem Streifen zu dem Kopf (31') zu liefern während der Tisch (36) so positioniert wird, daß eine Leiterplatte auf dem Tisch (36) unter dem Kopf (31') in einer Position plaziert wird, um den isolierten Pfosten in einer ersten gewählten Öffnung (54) aufzunehmen;

(f) Betreiben der Maschine in der Weise, um den vorderen isolierten Pfosten entlang dem trennbaren Bereich von dem Streifen abzuschneiden und dann den abgeschnittenen Pfosten in die Leiterplatte (32) in die gewählte Öffnung einzusetzen, wobei das Einsetzen das Drücken des Pfostens mit den Unterteil voran in und durch die Leiterplattenöffnung hindurch mit ein-



schließt; und

(g) Wiederholen der Schritte (e) und (f), um den nächsten vorderen isolierten Pfosten an dem Streifen abzutrennen und in eine von der ersten Öffnung beabstandete zweite gewählte Öffnung in der Leiterplatte einzustecken.

7. Zusammenhängender Streifen formgespritzter Kunststoffkörper (17, 17'), wobei jeder einen Innenhohlraum aufweist oder jeder eine Öffnung an beiden Enden aufweist, wovon ein Ende (28) kegelig ist, benachbarte formgespritzte Kunststoffkörper miteinander über trennbare Kunststoffstücke (18, 18'') verbunden sind, ein in den Hohlräumen jedes formgespritzten Körpers angeordnetes Metallverbindungselement (25) in dem Falle, bei dem die Körper mit einem Innenhohlraum und dem Metallverbindungselement (25) hergestellt werden, einen Metallfeder-Clip zum Aufnehmen und elektrischen Verbinden benachbarter Stifte (35) an Anschlußelementen einer Leiterplatte, wenn diese darauf aufgesteckt werden, aufweist, ein in jedem Hohlraum angeordnetes hohles Metalldrahtverbindungselement (43') in dem Falle, bei dem die formgespritzten Körper (17') mit einer Öffnung an beiden Enden und dem Metalldrahtverbindungselement hergestellt werden, einen aufgeweiteten hohlen Anteil, der so konfiguriert ist, daß es in den formgespritzten Körper paßt, und einen integrierten hohlen langgestreckten verengten Anteil aufweist, der sich durch die Öffnung an dem kegeligen Ende des formgespritzten Körpers erstreckt.
8. Zusammenhängender Streifen formgespritzter Kunststoffkörper (17''), die miteinander über trennbare Kunststoffstücke (18'') verbunden sind, wobei jeder formgespritzte Körper einen Führungspfosten aufweist, der an beiden Enden abgeschrägt ist, an einem Ende gegabelt ist, und einen vergrößerten Umfang in der Nähe seines gegabelten Endes aufweist.
9. Kombination eines zusammenhängenden Streifens nach Anspruch 7 oder 8 mit einer Vorratsrolle, auf welche der zusammenhängende Streifen aufgewickelt ist.

Revendications

1. Procédé pour la mécanisation de la fabrication et de l'assemblage de pièces de connecteur, comportant les étapes consistant à:

(a) former par un procédé de moulage en continu une bande allongée de composants individuels en plastique (17, 17'), présentant chacun une cavité ou orifice intérieur, interconnectés

par des régions en plastique (18, 18') pouvant être coupées;

(b) enrouler la bande allongée sur une première bobine (20, 40);

(c) monter la première bobine (20, 40) sur une machine de l'assemblage;

(d) amener la bande allongée provenant de la première bobine (20, 40) à une tête d'insertion (23, 42) de la machine de l'assemblage, de sorte que la tête d'insertion reçoive le premier des composants individuels en plastique;

(e) commander à la tête d'insertion de la machine de l'assemblage d'insérer une pièce de connecteur (25, 43) dans le premier composant en plastique;

(f) commander ensuite à la machine de l'assemblage de séparer ledit premier composant de la bande allongée;

(g) répéter les étapes (e) et (f) pour insérer et séparer le premier composant en plastique suivant de la bande allongée.

2. Procédé pour la mécanisation de la fabrication et de l'assemblage de pièces de connecteur selon la revendication 1, comportant l'étape consistant à doter la machine de l'assemblage d'un support (36) destiné à soutenir une plaque de circuit imprimé (32) présentant des broches (35) ou des orifices pour la réception des composants en plastique; commander à la machine de l'assemblage de positionner le support de manière à placer une plaque de circuit imprimé sous la tête d'insertion (23, 42), de sorte que, au cas où le premier composant en plastique doit être placé sur une plaque de circuit imprimé, le composant en plastique peut être placé en un emplacement sélectionné sur la plaque de circuit imprimé, et des composants en plastique suivants peuvent être placés en un autre emplacement sélectionné ou en un emplacement sélectionné d'une autre plaque de circuit imprimé.

3. Procédé pour la mécanisation de la fabrication et de l'assemblage de pièces de connecteur selon la revendication 1, comportant l'étape consistant à former une cavité dans chacun des composants en plastique (17) individuels; à doter la machine de l'assemblage de moyens pour conserver une réserve de morceaux de fil en métal pour ressort (25), ces morceaux constituant les pièces de connecteur; à commander à la tête d'insertion (23) de la machine de l'assemblage d'insérer dans chaque cavité des composants en plastique un des morceaux de fil en métal pour ressort (25) pour former une seconde bande allongée de connecteur de pontage; à enrouler la seconde bande allongée sur une seconde bobine (21'); à doter la machine de l'assemblage d'une machine d'insertion (30) présentant un support (36) destiné à soutenir une pla-



que de circuit imprimé (32) présentant des broches (35) pour la réception d'un connecteur de pontage (34), et présentant une tête d'insertion (31) pour insérer les connecteurs de pontage sur la plaque de circuit imprimé; à monter la seconde bobine (21') sur la machine d'insertion (30) et à amener la seconde bande allongée provenant de la seconde bobine à la tête d'insertion (31) de la machine d'insertion (30); à commander à la machine d'insertion (30) de fournir le premier connecteur de pontage (17) de la seconde bande allongée à la tête d'insertion (31), tout en positionnant le support (36) de telle sorte qu'une plaque de circuit imprimé (32) placée sur le support soit située en dessous de la tête d'insertion (31), dans une position qui lui permet de recevoir le connecteur de pontage (17) des emplacements choisis de broches; à actionner la machine d'insertion (30) pour séparer le premier connecteur de pontage de la seconde bande allongée, et ensuite insérer le connecteur de pontage (34) séparé sur les broches (35) de la plaque de circuit imprimé, à l'emplacement sélectionné; et à répéter la commande à la machine d'insertion (30) pour fournir le premier connecteur de pontage et actionner la machine d'insertion pour qu'elle sépare, de telle sorte qu'elle sépare et insère le premier connecteur de pontage suivant de la seconde bande allongée sur des broches (35) situées en un second emplacement sélectionné de la plaque de circuit imprimé (32) ou sur des broches situées en un emplacement sélectionné d'une autre plaque de circuit imprimé.

4. Procédé pour la mécanisation de la fabrication et de l'assemblage de pièces de connecteur selon la revendication 1, comportant les étapes consistant à former par le procédé de moulage en continu les composants individuels en plastique (17") sous la forme de manchons de retenue à fond rétréci (28); à doter la machine de l'assemblage d'une partie d'insertion (42) et d'une partie de l'assemblage (48); à doter la partie d'insertion (42) d'une réserve de tubes creux façonnés en métal, présentant un sommet rétréci et une tête d'insertion (42); à insérer les tubes creux individuels dans chaque manchon (17") de telle sorte que le sommet rétréci du tube vienne se loger dans le fond rétréci du manchon creux, pour former une seconde bande allongée de conducteurs d'extrémité isolés; à enrouler la seconde bande allongée sur une seconde bobine (41); à doter la partie de l'assemblage (48) d'une tête (48) pour l'assemblage de bornes de fil sur l'extrémité dénudée d'un fil; à monter la seconde bobine (41) sur la partie de l'assemblage (48) et à amener la seconde bande allongée provenant de la bobine (41) à la tête (48); à commander la partie de l'assemblage (48) pour qu'elle fournisse le premier connecteur de la bande à la tête (48); et ensuite à commander à la machine de séparer la première pièce de connecteur

provenant de la seconde bande allongée tout en insérant l'extrémité dénudée du fil dans le tube creux, par l'intermédiaire du manchon creux, et en assemblant le tube et le manchon pour fixer le connecteur au fil; à répéter les étapes pour séparer le premier connecteur suivant de la bande en vue de recevoir une autre extrémité dénudée de fil.

5. Procédé selon la revendication 4, dans lequel la partie de l'assemblage (48) comporte une tête (48) pour servir les bornes de fil sur l'extrémité dénudée des fils.

6. Procédé pour la mécanisation de la fabrication et de l'assemblage de montants isolés (17") sur une plaque de circuit imprimé (32'), comportant les étapes consistant à:

(a) par un procédé de moulage en continu, former une bande allongée de montants isolés individuels en plastique (17") présentant une section transversale non uniforme et un fond fendu (30), et reliés par des régions en plastique (18") pouvant être coupées,

(b) enrouler sur une bobine (53) la bande continue formée au cours de l'étape (a),

(c) fournir une machine d'insertion (30') présentant une table (36) destinée à soutenir une plaque de circuit imprimé (32') présentant des logements (54) destinés à recevoir un montant isolé (17"), et une tête (31') pour insérer des montants isolés (17"),

(d) monter la bobine (53) de l'étape (b) sur la machine d'insertion (30') et amener à la tête (31') la bande continue provenant de la bobine (53),

(e) commander à la machine de fournir le premier montant isolé (17") de la bande à la tête (31') tout en positionnant la table (36) de telle sorte qu'une plaque de circuit imprimé placée sur la table (36) soit située en dessous de la tête (31'), dans une position lui permettant de recevoir le montant isolé (17") sur un premier logement (54) sélectionné,

(f) actionner la machine pour qu'elle coupe le premier montant isolé de la bande, le long de la région pouvant être coupée, et qu'elle insère ensuite le montant découpé dans la plaque de circuit imprimé (32), dans le logement sélectionné, ladite insertion comportant l'enfoncement du montant par sa base dans le logement du circuit imprimé et à travers celui-ci,

(g) répéter les étapes (e) et (f), pour découper et insérer le premier montant isolé suivant de la bande dans un second logement sélectionné, écarté du premier logement de la plaque de circuit imprimé.



7. Bande continue de corps moulés en plastique (17, 17') présentant chacun une cavité intérieure ou présentant chacun un orifice à l'une ou l'autre extrémité, une extrémité (28) étant rétrécie, des corps moulés en plastique contigus étant reliés l'un à l'autre par des pièces en plastique (18, 18') pouvant être coupées, un connecteur métallique (25) étant situé dans des cavités de chacun des corps moulés (17) dans le cas où les corps sont configurés avec une cavité intérieure, et ledit connecteur métallique (25) comportant une pince élastique en métal destinée à recevoir et connecter électriquement des broches contiguës (35) à des bornes d'une plaque de câblage imprimée, lorsqu'elles y sont insérées, un connecteur creux (43') à fil métallique étant situé dans chacune des cavités, dans lequel les corps moulés (17') sont configurés avec un logement à l'une ou l'autre extrémité, et ledit connecteur à fil métallique comportant une partie creuse élargie configurée pour s'ajuster dans le corps moulé, et une partie creuse allongée intégrée s'étendant dans le logement à l'extrémité rétrécie du corps moulé.

8. Bande continue de corps moulés en plastiques (17'') reliés les uns aux autres par des pièces en plastique (18'') pouvant être coupées, chacun desdits corps moulés comportant aux deux extrémités, un montant de guidage biseauté, fourchu à une extrémité, et présentant une circonférence élargie à proximité de son extrémité fourchue.

9. Combinaison d'une bande continue selon la revendication 7 ou 8 avec une bobine d'alimentation sur laquelle ladite bande continue est enroulée.