

AE 436

PATENT

SHIELDED ELECTRICAL CONNECTOR

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 This invention relates generally to electrical connectors for terminating multiconductor electrical cables and pertains more particularly to terminating shielded multiconductor cables and for continuing cable shielding through the connector and the connection interface.

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Fig. 1 depicts an electrical connector jack (receptacle) which is commonly known by the standard designation "RJ45". Referring to Figs. 1-3, RJ45 connector jack 10 is adapted to terminate multiconductor cable 12, which has individual electrical conductors 14. Reference numeral 16 identifies a so-called "stuffer member" or "dressing block", the upper undersurface of which defines conductor-retaining undulations 16a, which maintain the conductors in position for insulation displacement connection (IDC) with electrical contacts, and latching detents 16b. The conductors are extended from cable 12, e.g., by removing outer insulation thereof, by peeling back inner cable shield braiding and by untwisting the insulated conductors to lay them flat in undulations 16a. The conductors are trimmed from their condition shown in Fig. 2 such that they are conterminous with the leftward end of undulations 16a.

So loaded with the insulated conductors, stuffer member 16 is inverted and disposed as is illustrated in Fig. 3, which illustrates a further component of the connector jack, namely, housing 18. Housing 18 defines connector plug-receiving passage 18a, top-open compartment 18b and latches 18c. Electrical contacts 20 are supported in housing 18 and have spring portions cantilever-disposed

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in passage 18a and IDC portions (not shown), which are disposed at the leftward end of compartment 18b.

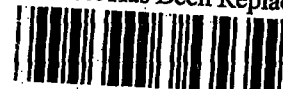
5 Upon forcible insertion of stuffer member 16 into housing compartment 18b, the IDC portions of contacts 20 terminate conductors 14. Latches 18c snap retentively about latching detents 16b to secure the jack connector assembly.

10 The jack connector of Figs. 1-3 is not a shielded assembly. Thus, the jack connector and the connection interface, i.e., when a plug connector is inserted into passage 18a, are not afforded electromagnetic interference (EMI) protection. This type of protection is highly desired, indeed, imperative, in various present day digital communication systems.

15 While countless approaches are seen in prior art patents and in commercially-available connector products to provide connector jacks, such as the RJ45, with EMI protection, the approach of most relevance to the subject invention is seen in the showings of Figs. 4
20 and 5, which show respective components of a composite EMI shield in a connector jack of the RJ45 type sold commercially by the assignee of the subject application.

25 In Fig. 4, sheet metal member 24 has a box-like portion 24a, having interiorly-directed lip 24b, resident aside passage 24c. A rearward deck 24d has latches 24e upstanding therefrom and contact leaf 24f.

30 In Fig. 5, stuffer member 22 is constituted principally by a body of electrically insulative material. The body has an uncoated part 22a, defining the undulations for conductor retention, but the remnant of the body is coated with an electrically conductive substance or substances applied in successive layers.



5 In assembling such commercially-available connector,
housing 18 with contacts 20 therein is inserted into
sheet member 24 of Fig. 4, latches 24e becoming
superimposed on latches 18c. Then, stuffer member 22 of
10 Fig. 5 is forcibly inserted onto rearward deck 24d of
sheet member 24, whereupon the events above discussed
for Figs. 1-3 occur, i.e., the conductors are terminated
in IDC manner and the latches 18c engage latching
detents 22b. Further, contact leaf 24f engages the
15 undersurface of stuffer member 22 to provide
electrically conductivity between the sheet member and
the stuffer member, which function, in effect as
cooperative components of a composite EMI shield.

15 While the commercial product of Figs. 1-5 has met
technological demands for an acceptable EMI-shielded
RJ45 connector jack and connector, where an exteriorly
shielded plug is inserted therein, the present invention
looks to improve the product in several respects.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 The present invention has as its primary objective the
provision of improved EMI shields for electrical
connectors.

A particular object of the invention is to provide an
improved EMI-shielded RJ45 connector jack and connector.

25 A quite specific object of the invention is to provide
enhanced electrical continuity as between cooperative
components of a composite, plural part shield for an
electrical connector and to derive cable strain relief
from cooperative structures of a stuffer member and a
30 sheet member in an electrical connector.

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5 In attaining the foregoing and other objects, the
invention provides, in one aspect, an electrical
connector for terminating electrical conductors of a
multiconductor cable, the electrical connector
comprising an electrically insulative housing defining
an passage for receipt of an electrical connector plug
and an open interior compartment, a plurality of
electrical contacts supported in the housing, the
contacts having first portions accessible through the
10 housing passage and second IDC portions resident in the
compartment, an electrically conductive sheet member
fully circumscribing a part of the housing in which the
contact first portions are resident and partly
circumscribing the compartment and a stuffer member
15 closing the compartment and dressing electrical
conductors into engagement with the contact second IDC
portions. The stuffer member has an electrically
conductive part in electrical continuity with the sheet
member and a stuffer part, the stuffer part being
20 comprised of electrically insulative material, the
stuffer member and the sheet member defining structures
jointly operating to provide strain relief for the
cable.

25 In another aspect of the invention, the stuffer member
and the sheet member define further structures jointly
operating to provide electrical continuity between the
cable shield and each of the stuffer member and the
sheet member.

30 In a further aspect of the invention, the stuffer member
is preferably comprised of a body of electrically
insulative material having an uncoated portion defining
a stuffer part and a portion coated with an electrically
conductive material, the coated portion defining wing
members in interference fit with the interior of the
35 sheet member, the stuffer member and the sheet member
jointly defining an electrical shield for the electrical



connector.

5 The foregoing and other objects and features of the invention will be further understood from the following detailed discussion of preferred practices and embodiments thereof and from the drawings wherein like reference numerals identify like components and part throughout.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

10 Figs. 1-3 are perspective views explaining the structure of the RJ45 electrical connector jack.

Figs. 4 and 5 are perspective views depicting cooperative components of a composite shield for the above-discussed commercial product of the assignee hereof.

15 Fig. 6 is a perspective view of a sheet metal shielding member in accordance with the invention.

Fig. 7 is a perspective view of a stuffer member shield in accordance with the invention.

20 Fig. 8 is a plan view of the sheet metal shielding member of Fig. 6, with a latching IDC conductor terminating member inserted therein.

Fig. 9 is rear view of the stuffer member shield of Fig. 7.

25 Fig. 10 is a rear view of a connector in accordance with the invention shown in conjunction with a multiconductor cable, partly sectioned at plane X-X of Figs. 6 and 7.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S)

Referring to Fig. 6, sheet metal member 26 has a box-like portion 26a, having interiorly-directed lip 26b, resident aside passage 26c. A counterpart interiorly-directed lip (not shown) exists on the opposite side of passage 26c.

Member 26 further defines a rearward extension 26d, which has a top-open compartment 26e, which vertically full sidewalls 26f and 26g and a rear wall 26h which is vertically full except for opening 26h-1 which is in upper part rectangular and in lower, continuing part, semicircular.

Turning to Fig. 7, stuffer member 28 is constituted principally by a body of electrically insulative material. The body has an uncoated part 28a, defining the undulations for conductor retention, but the remnant of the body is coated with an electrically conductive substance or substances applied in successive layers.

The body includes a rearward, generally solid portion 28b, which supports latch member 28b-1 leftwardly thereon, and a counterpart latch member 28b-2 (Fig. 9) rightwardly thereon.

Forward sidewalls 28c and 28d depend from top cover 28e, which supports puller member 28f, which is useful in disassembly, given the interference fit of components discussed below.

Stuffer member 28 further defines a cylindrical passage 28b-3 through otherwise solid portion 28b, as is seen in Fig. 9.

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5 Dimensioning in accordance with the invention will be understood from the dimension lines shown in Figs. 8 and 9. Taking first the dimensions D1 and D2, the former is selected to be somewhat greater than the latter, whereby an interference fit will exist as between stuffer member sidewall 28c and sheet member sidewall 28f and as between stuffer member sidewall 28d and sheet member sidewall 28g. This dimensional selection gives rise to enhanced electrical continuity as between the stuffer member and the sheet member and enhances mechanical assembly strength above that afforded by latching engagements.

15 Dimension D3 is made essentially equal to dimension D4, such that outer side extents of the stuffer member and the sheet member are flush with one another.

20 The radii of the semicircular bottom portion of passage 26h-1 and of passage 28b-3 are selected to be equal to the nominal radius of cable 12. However, passage 28b-3 is so positioned vertically of body portion 28b that, on stuffer member insertion, a scissor-type action occurs as between the semicircular bottom portion of passage 26h-1 and the upper semicircular portion of passage 28b-3. This is illustrated in Fig. 10, wherein the ultimate result is that the respective semicircular portions form a generally elliptical passage with the minor axis of the ellipse being less than the nominal diameter of cable 12, thereby applying strain relief to the cable. Also illustrated in Fig. 10, in the partly sectioned part thereof, is the interference fit as between stuffer member sidewall 28d and sheet member sidewall 26g.

35 Of consequence to the improved EMI shielding afforded by the arrangement of the invention, it is to be noted that sidewall 26f of the sheet member has substantially coextensive surface registration with metal coated surfaces of the stuffer member, i.e., latching member



28b-1 and sidewall 28c. The same is true as respects
sidewall 26g and latching member 28b-2 and sidewall 28d.

5 As will also be appreciated, the structures latching the
connector housing and the stuffer member are fully
interiorly disposed relative to the sheet member and the
structure retaining the sheet member and the stuffer
member are independent of such latching structures.

10 By way of summary of the foregoing and introduction to
the ensuing claims, the invention will be seen to
provide, in its preferred embodiment, an upstanding
electrical connector for terminating electrical
conductors of a multiconductor cable, the electrical
connector comprising an elongate electrically insulative
15 housing having a first portion defining an passage for
receipt of an electrical connector plug and a second
portion longitudinally successive to the first portion
and defining an interior compartment having open expanse
at least vertically of the housing, a plurality of
electrical contacts supported in the housing, the
20 contacts having first portions disposed in the housing
first portion and accessible through the housing passage
and second IDC portions resident in the compartment of
the housing second portion, an electrically conductive
sheet member having a first portion fully circumscribing
25 the housing first portion and a second portion
longitudinally successive to the sheet member first
portion and having parts defining opposed longitudinally
continuous sidewalls and a longitudinally disposed end
wall for the compartment, the end wall having a central
30 opening therethrough and a stuffer member closing the
compartment open expanse and dressing electrical
conductors into engagement with the contact second IDC
portions, the stuffer member being comprised of
electrically insulative material and having a portion
35 thereof coated with electrically conductive material and
defining a stuffer member end wall with a passage



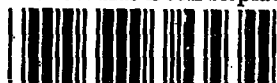
therethrough in longitudinal registry with the sheet member central opening.

5 The stuffer member includes a stuffer part in registry with the electrical contact second IDC portions in the compartment and has an uncoated portion defining the stuffer part, which defines undulations in registry with the electrical contact second IDC portions in the compartment.

10 The stuffer member portion further defines at least one electrically conductive part in electrically conductive relation with at least one of the opposed sidewalls of the sheet member, such part being further in mechanical interference fit relation with the sidewall.

15 The housing and the stuffer member define first intermatable retention structures for retaining the stuffer member with the housing and the sheet member and the stuffer member define second intermatable retention structures for retaining the stuffer member with the housing.

20 In a first broader aspect, the invention provides an electrical connector for terminating electrical conductors of a multiconductor cable, the electrical connector comprising an electrically insulative housing defining an passage for receipt of an electrical
25 connector plug and an open interior compartment, a plurality of electrical contacts supported in the housing, the contacts having first portions accessible through the housing passage and second IDC portions resident in the compartment, an electrically conductive
30 sheet member fully circumscribing a part of the housing in which the contact first portions are resident and partly circumscribing the compartment and a stuffer member closing the compartment and dressing electrical conductors into engagement with the contact second IDC



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portions, the stuffer member having an electrically conductive part in electrical continuity with the sheet member and a stuffer part, the stuffer part being comprised of electrically insulative material, the stuffer member and the sheet member defining structures jointly operating to provide strain relief for the cable.

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In a second broader aspect, the invention provides an electrical connector for terminating electrical conductors of a shielded multiconductor cable, the electrical connector comprising an electrically insulative housing defining an passage for receipt of an electrical connector plug and an open interior compartment, a plurality of electrical contacts supported in the housing, the contacts having first portions accessible through the housing passage and second IDC portions resident in the compartment, an electrically conductive sheet member fully circumscribing a part of the housing in which the contact first portions are resident and partly circumscribing the compartment and a stuffer member closing the compartment and dressing electrical conductors into engagement with the contact second IDC portions, the stuffer member having an electrically conductive part in electrical continuity with the sheet member and a stuffer part, the stuffer part being comprised of electrically insulative material, the stuffer member and the sheet member defining structures jointly operating to provide electrical continuity between the cable shield and each of the stuffer member and the sheet member.

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In a third broader aspect, the invention provides shielded electrical connector for terminating electrical conductors of a shielded multiconductor cable, the electrical connector comprising an electrically insulative housing defining an passage for



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THOMAS & BETTS LEGAL DEPT.

No. 6515 P. 18/29

5 receipt of an electrical connector plug and an open
interior compartment, a plurality of electrical contacts
supported in the housing, the contacts having first
portions accessible through the housing passage and
second IDC portions resident in the compartment, an
electrically conductive sheet member fully
circumscribing a part of the housing in which the
contact first portions are resident and partly
circumscribing the compartment and a stuffer member
10 closing the compartment and dressing electrical
conductors into engagement with the contact second IDC
portions, the stuffer member being comprised of a body
of electrically insulative material having an uncoated
portion defining a stuffer part and a portion coated
15 with an electrically conductive material, the coated
portion defining wing members in interference fit with
the interior of the sheet member, the stuffer member and
the sheet member jointly defining an electrical shield
for the electrical connector.

20 Lastly, the invention provides a stuffer member for an
electrical connector for use in terminating a shielded
electrical multiconductor cable, the stuffer member
comprised of a body of electrically insulative material
having an uncoated portion defining a stuffer part and
25 a portion coated with an electrically conductive
material, the coated portion defining a passage
therethrough for the multiconductor cable.

30 Various changes to the particularly disclosed embodiment
and practice may evidently be introduced without
departing from the invention. Accordingly, it is to be
appreciated that the particularly discussed and depicted
embodiment and practice of the invention are intended in
an illustrative and not in a limiting sense. The true
spirit and scope of the invention are set forth in the
35 ensuing claims.

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No. 6515 P. 19/29

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An upstanding electrical connector for terminating electrical conductors of a multiconductor cable, said electrical connector comprising:

5 (a) an elongate electrically insulative housing having a first portion defining an passage for receipt of an electrical connector plug and a second portion longitudinally successive to said first portion and defining an interior compartment having open expanse at least vertically of said housing;

10 (b) a plurality of electrical contacts supported in said housing, said contacts having first portions disposed in said housing first portion and accessible through said housing passage and second IDC portions resident in said compartment of said housing second portion;

15 (c) an electrically conductive sheet member having a first portion fully circumscribing said housing first portion and a second portion longitudinally successive to said sheet member first portion and having parts defining opposed longitudinally continuous sidewalls and a longitudinally disposed end wall for said compartment, said end wall having a central opening therethrough; and

20 (d) a stuffer member closing said compartment open expanse and dressing electrical conductors into engagement with said contact second IDC portions, said stuffer member being comprised of electrically insulative material and having a portion thereof coated with electrically conductive material and defining a stuffer member end wall with a passage therethrough in longitudinal registry with said sheet member central opening.

25 2. The connector claimed in claim 1, wherein said stuffer member includes a stuffer part in registry with said electrical contact second IDC portions in said compartment.



3. The connector claimed in claim 2, wherein said stuffer member has an uncoated portion defining said stuffer part.

4. The connector claimed in claim 3, wherein said stuffer part defines undulations in registry with said electrical contact second IDC portions in said compartment.

5. The connector claimed in claim 1, wherein said stuffer member portion further defines an electrically conductive part in electrically conductive relation with one of said opposed sidewalls of said sheet member.

6. The connector claimed in claim 1, wherein said stuffer member portion further defines first and second electrically conductive parts in electrically conductive relation respectively with said opposed sidewalls of said sheet member.

7. The connector claimed in claim 1, wherein said sheet member and said stuffer member define intermatable retention structures for retaining said stuffer member with said housing.

8. An electrical connector jack for terminating electrical conductors of a multiconductor cable, said electrical connector jack comprising:

(a) an electrically insulative housing defining an passage for receipt of an electrical connector plug and an open interior compartment;

(b) a plurality of electrical contacts supported in said housing, said contacts having first portions accessible through said housing passage and second IDC portions resident in said compartment;

(c) an electrically conductive sheet member fully circumscribing a part of said housing in which said contact first portions are resident and partly



circumscribing said compartment; and

(d) a stuffer member closing said compartment and dressing electrical conductors into engagement with said contact. second IDC portions, said stuffer member having an electrically conductive part in electrical continuity with said sheet member and a stuffer part, said stuffer part being comprised of electrically insulative material,

said stuffer member and said sheet member defining structures jointly operating to provide strain relief for said cable.

9. An electrical connector jack for terminating electrical conductors of a shielded multiconductor cable, said electrical connector jack comprising:

(a) an electrically insulative housing defining an passage for receipt of an electrical connector plug and an open interior compartment;

(b) a plurality of electrical contacts supported in said housing, said contacts having first portions accessible through said housing passage and second IDC portions resident in said compartment;

(c) an electrically conductive sheet member fully circumscribing a part of said housing in which said contact first portions are resident and partly circumscribing said compartment; and

(d) a stuffer member closing said compartment and dressing electrical conductors into engagement with said contact second IDC portions, said stuffer member having an electrically conductive part in electrical continuity with said sheet member and a stuffer part, said stuffer part being comprised of electrically insulative material, said stuffer member and said sheet member defining structures jointly operating to provide electrical continuity between said cable shield and each of said stuffer member and said sheet member.



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10. A shielded electrical connector jack for terminating electrical conductors of a shielded multiconductor cable, said electrical connector jack comprising:

5 (a) an electrically insulative housing defining an passage for receipt of an electrical connector plug and an open interior compartment;

10 (b) a plurality of electrical contacts supported in said housing, said contacts having first portions accessible through said housing passage and second IDC portions resident in said compartment;

15 (c) an electrically conductive sheet member fully circumscribing a part of said housing in which said contact first portions are resident and partly circumscribing said compartment; and

20 (d) a stuffer member closing said compartment and dressing electrical conductors into engagement with said contact second IDC portions, said stuffer member being comprised of a body of electrically insulative material having an uncoated portion defining a stuffer part and a portion coated with an electrically conductive material, said coated portion defining wing members in interference fit with the interior of said sheet member, said stuffer member and said sheet member jointly
25 defining an electrical shield for said electrical connector jack.



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