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Penrock

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[54] **BRASSIERE STRUCTURE**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **128/465**

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A41c 3/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 128/465, 474, 477, 128/469, 471, 472, 476, 486

[56] **References Cited**

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

Means adapted to prevent those portions of a flat, vertical, horizontal band of a brassiere which occurs below the breast receiving cups of the brassiere from rolling and/or wrinkling upwardly, said means including vertical stiffening means in the band adjacent the lateral outer side of each cup and laterally inwardly and downwardly inclined, normally straight, flexible and resilient stays extending from the reinforcing means at points spaced above the lower end of the band to the bottom edge of the band at points below the cups.

10 Claims, 8 Drawing Figures

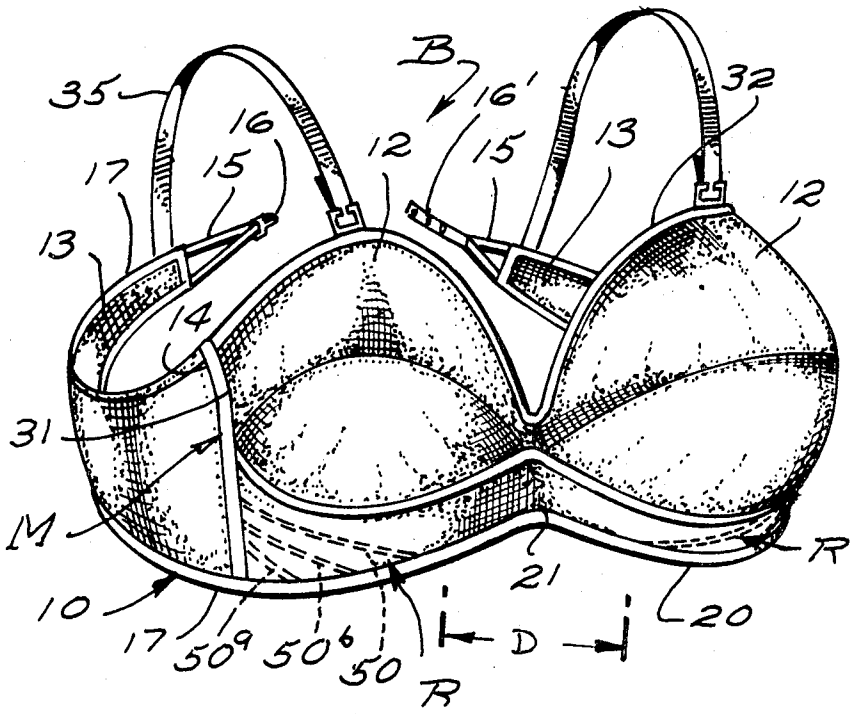


Fig. 1.

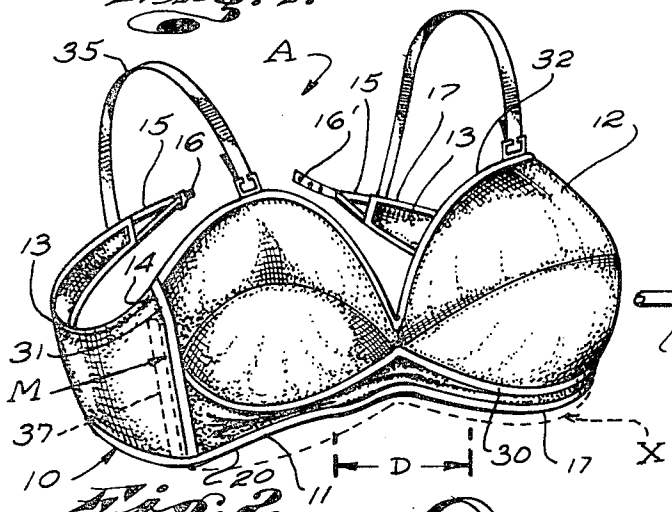


Fig. 2.

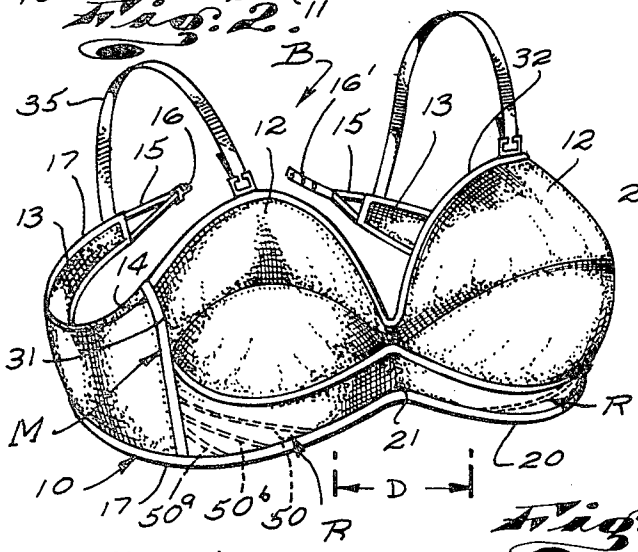


Fig. 3.

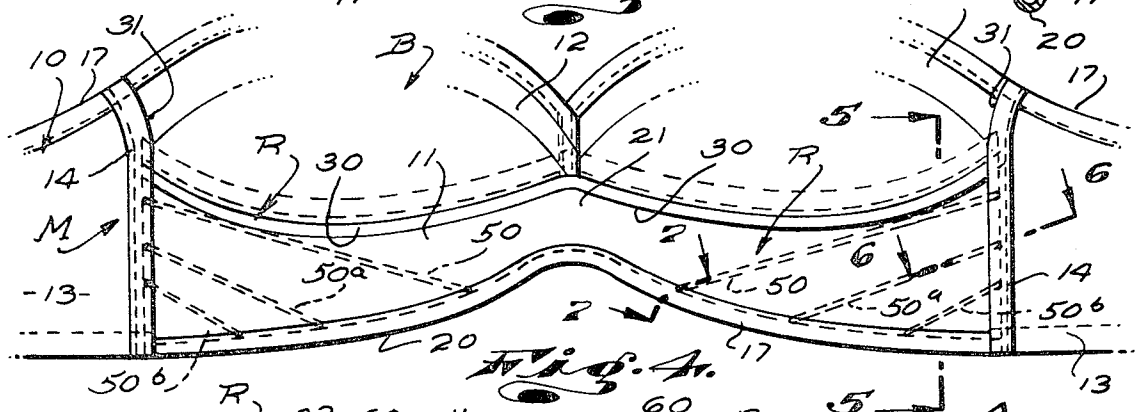


Fig. 4.

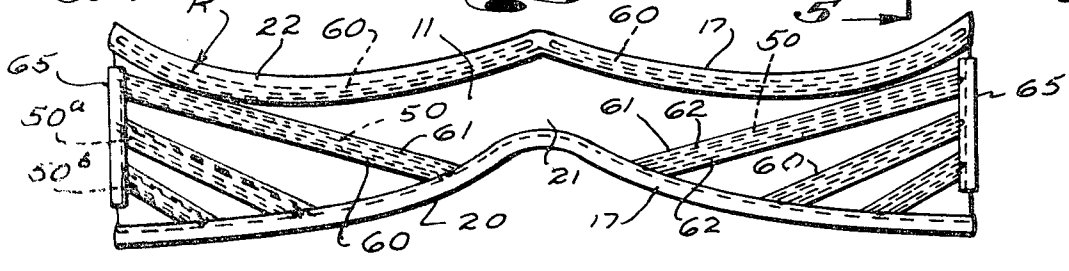


Fig. 5.

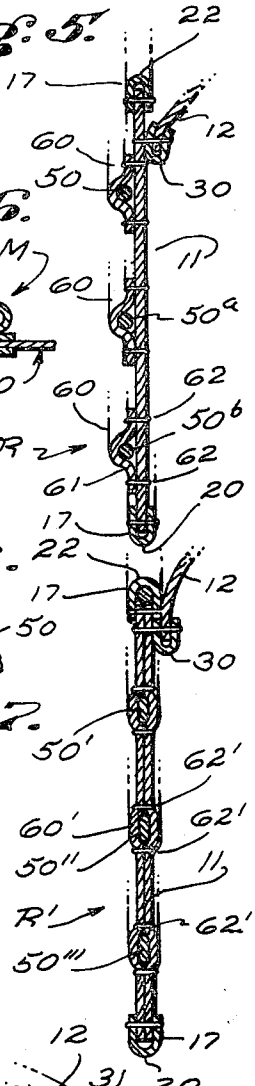


Fig. 6.

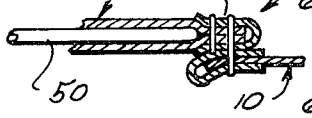


Fig. 8.

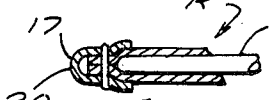


Fig. 7.

BRASSIERE STRUCTURE

This invention has to do with a brassiere and is more particularly concerned with an improved brassiere structure which provides for comfortable and healthful support of the wearer's mammary glands (hereinafter referred to as "breasts").

Women's breasts are not rigid or truly firm, but rather, are quite fluid, plastic and/or ductile in nature and are subject to being moved about and their mass widely distributed by the force of gravity and by externally applied forces. The glandular tissue of women's breasts is tender or delicate and is subject to being broken down by improperly applied forces and is subject to being moved and/or displaced to a substantial extent beneath and relative to the skin and other body structure adjacent thereto.

The ordinary brassiere is primarily intended to engage the lower portion of the breasts of the wearer and to hold the breasts up and to counter gravitational force which tends to pull and draw the breasts downwardly. Most brassieres, in addition to the above noted purpose, further seek to apply external forces upon the wearer's breasts and to confine the breasts in a manner to form and hold them in an attractive, as well as in a comfortably supported condition.

A principal shortcoming to be found in most brassiere structures resides in the tendency of the lower rear or inside portion of the wearer's breasts to migrate, flow or extrude downwardly behind the lower, forward, edge of the brassiere which extends across the forward rib-cage of the wearer. Such downwardly movement of the breasts is, for the most part, the result of gravitational forces acting upon the breasts coupled with the fluid or plastic nature of breast tissue and its ability and/or tendency to move beneath or relative to the skin.

The noted forward, lower edges of brassieres are made and intended to engage the forward rib-cage of the wearer, immediately below the wearer's breasts with sufficient force to prevent the above noted downward movement and displacement of the wearer's breasts, but without such force as to cause discomfort to the wearer. As a result of the above, the forces applied are, at best, a compromise which all too often fails to retain the breasts as desired and which, when such failure occurs causes great discomfort and is potentially injurious and hazardous to the wearer.

When the lower, inner or rear portion of a woman's breasts drop, or extrude below and from the lower edge of her brassiere, breast tissue is adversely worked upon and broken down. The skin and the breast tissue occurring adjacent to the noted edge of the brassiere is constricted and is cut into by that edge of the brassiere causing great discomfort and inviting potentially irreparable harmful results.

In an effort to overcome the above noted disadvantages in brassieres, the prior art has established brassieres, the lower forward edges of which are established by a ribbon or front panel-like part of considerable and sufficient vertical extent so as to distribute the forces applied to the wearer over a larger surface area and to thereby enable the comfortable application of sufficient forces to prevent the wearer's breasts from dropping or moving downwardly thereby and bringing about the above noted adverse effects.

If a lower front edge or panel of sufficient vertical extent is provided, a tendency of breast tissue which starts to drop and flow beneath the panel to be urged back and upwardly from beneath the panel is established and the forces required to be applied to effectively retain the breasts is reduced.

While the above has been found effective in principle, most structures provided by the prior art to bring about the noted and sought after end results have met with notable limited success. With few exceptions, the lower front panels of brassieres intended to gain the above noted end, are soft, flexible parts and are such that after a short period of time and after normal movement and working of the body of the wearer, the panels roll and/or wrinkle up in such a manner that their effective vertical extent is little more than a single line by which the breasts of the wearer are free to drop and move.

The wrinkling and/or rolling up of the lower front panel of such a brassiere is greatest when the wearer raises and lowers her arms and the areas where wrinkling and/or rolling of the panels is most likely to occur is directly beneath the wearer's breasts, adjacent the rib-cage and at opposite sides of the wearer's diaphragm.

It has been found that the central portions of such a front panel, which extend across the diaphragm and between the wearer's ribs does not tend to wrinkle or roll up and is caused to remain extended and flat by the normal expansion and contraction of the diaphragm, as the wearer breathes.

In an effort to prevent wrinkling and/or rolling of the front panels of brassieres, the prior art has attempted to stiffen the panels with crinoline or the like, only to have a structure which is uncomfortably and unattractively stiff. Other attempts have involved the insertion of laterally spaced vertical stays which stays, when subjected to the vertical forces encountered, poke and pierce the wearer causing greater discomfort and damage. In yet other attempts to prevent wrinkling and/or rolling of the front panels of brassieres, beneath the breasts of the wearer, vertical stays of considerable extent have been placed at or adjacent the ends of the panels, to occur adjacent the lateral outer sides of the breasts, but such efforts have proven to be of little benefit as such stays or stiffening means do not in fact support or stiffen the panels beneath the breasts where undesired wrinkling and/or rolling occurs.

The only successful means that I know of for preventing the front panel of a brassiere from wrinkling or rolling up in such a way as to render it ineffective is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 3,149,635, issued Sept. 22, 1964 to Sonia G. Garutso. The means in that patent consists of laterally outwardly opening U-shaped spring members sewn into each half side of the front panel of the brassiere, to extend horizontally thereof in a vertical plane. The noted spring members effectively prevented rolling and/or wrinkling of the panel beneath the wearer's breasts, created no discomfort and presented no hazard.

While the above noted structure or means has been proven to be most effective, it has proven to be quite costly and complicated to manufacture and has not been made readily available in the market place.

A principal object of my invention is to provide an improved front panel structure for brassieres to extend horizontally beneath the breasts of the wearer in a man-

ner to prevent downward displacement of the wearer's breast from within the brassiere.

It is another object and a feature of my invention to provide a front panel for a brassiere of the character referred to which will not roll or wrinkle up beneath the wearer's breasts.

Another object and feature of my invention is to provide novel anti-wrinkle and anti-rolling reinforcing means for the front panel of a brassiere which means is safe and comfortable and which affords for desired vertical resiliency and yielding of the brassiere panel.

Yet another object and feature of the instant invention is to provide a reinforcing means of the character referred to above, which means comprises a plurality of downwardly and laterally inwardly inclined flexible stay members, which extent laterally outwardly and upwardly through the panel from beneath the wearer's breast to a point laterally outwardly and rearwardly of the forward primary portions of the wearer's breasts.

It is yet another object and feature of my invention to provide stay members of the character referred to which are resilient and flexible in both vertical and horizontal planes whereby they yieldingly bend and conform to and about the adjacent position of the wearer's body and resiliently yield and bend under applied vertical forces.

It is still another object and feature of this invention to provide a reinforcing means of the character referred to wherein the resilient, flexible stay members are arranged and disposed in such a manner that they are not subject to causing discomfort, damage or harm to the wearer.

It is an object and feature of the present invention to provide a reinforcing means of the character referred to which is readily adapted for use and incorporation in and with a large percentage of existing brassiere constructions without requiring major redesigning of such construction.

Finally, it is an object and feature of this invention to provide a means of the character referred to which is easy and economical to make and use and which is both highly effective and dependable in operation.

The foregoing and other objects and features of my invention will be fully understood from the following detailed description of typical preferred forms and applications of my invention, throughout which description reference is made to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a typical brassiere structure as provided by the prior art;

FIG. 2 is a view similar to FIG. 1 showing the brassiere with the present invention embodied therein;

FIG. 3 is a front view of a portion of the brassiere shown in FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a rear view of the front panel of the structure shown in FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a sectional view taken substantially as indicated by line 5—5 on FIG. 3;

FIG. 6 is a sectional view taken as indicated by line 6—6 on FIG. 3;

FIG. 7 is a sectional view taken as indicated by line 6—6 on FIG. 3; and

FIG. 8 is a view similar to FIG. 5, showing another embodiment of my invention.

Referring to the drawings, the brassieres A and B shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 of the drawings embody the same basic brassiere structure. In FIG. 1 the brassiere A does not include my invention while in FIG. 2 the brassiere B has my invention embodied therein.

It is to be understood and it will become abundantly clear in the following disclosure that the exact nature and form of brassiere construction in and with which my invention can be embodied can vary widely in practice and that the basic form and construction of brassiere I have elected to show is for the purpose of illustrating a typical embodiment of my invention.

The brassieres A and B commonly include a horizontal torso encircling band **10**, comprising an elongate front panel **11** which supports and carries breast engaging and supporting cups **12—12** and reinforcing means M, elongate side panels **13—13**, each having one end attached to one and adjacent related end of the front panel by seams **14—14** and having loop-like elastic straps **15—15** attached to their other or free ends. The straps **15—15** have suitable hook and eye coupling means **16—16'** secured thereto and adapted to be engaged to close the body encircling band tightly about the torso of the wearer with the front panel **11** thereof at a level below the breasts.

The upper and lower edges of the band **10** are, in accordance with common practice, suitable finished by a binding **17** sewed thereto.

The portions of the lower edge of the band established by the side panels **13—13** extend generally horizontally along the portions of the wearer's torso contacted thereby and the upper edges thereof diverge upwardly relative to the lower edges from narrow, rear, free ends of said side panels, in a curved line of increasing steepness to their other or forward ends, where they join the upper edges of their related cups **12** at the seams **14—14.**

The front panel **11**, extending between the seams **14—14** and the front ends of the side panels **13—13** has a lower edge **20**, the ends of which are coincident with the lower edges of the side panels at said seams and thence extend laterally inwardly and upwardly in slight curves to the central portion **21** of said panel. The ends of the upper edge **22** of the front panel **11** terminate and join the front ends of the side panels at points spaced below the upper edges of the side panels. The upper edge **22** of the front panel is characterized by downwardly sweeping, concaved, curves extending from the opposite ends of the panel to the central portion **21** thereof, where they are joined by a crowned or convex apex.

In practice, the extent and nature of curvature of the upper and lower edges **20** and **22** of the front panel **11** can be varied widely as desired or as circumstances require.

The breast-receiving cups **12—12** are forwardly projecting, rearwardly opening, substantially conical or semi-conical sectional assemblies, having bound lower edges **30** stitched and secured to their related curved edge portions of the upper edge of the panel **11**, vertical outer side edges **31** secured and stitched to the front edges of the side panels **11**, above the points where the edge **22** joins the side panels and sweeping, upwardly and thence downwardly curved upper edges **32** extending laterally inwardly from the side edges **31** and converging at or near the apex of the curved edge **22** of the panel **11.**

The stiffening means M occurs at or adjacent to the forward ends of the side panels **13** and along the vertical seams **14—14**, where the related ends and edges of

the front and side panels 11 and 13 and the cup 12 join and are stitched and secured together. In those cases where the edges of the several related parts, at and along the seams 14 are suitably bound, sufficient material and stitching is presented at and along the seams 14 to impart desired stiffness and establish the stiffening means M. In other cases, vertical reinforcing stays, such as is indicated at 37 in FIG. 1 of the drawings can be provided within the seams 14 or within sleevelike receptacles established in the side panels adjacent to the seams 14—14.

In those garments where seams, such as the seams 14—14 are not provided, stay receiving sleeves, established by tapes stitched to the inside of the garment or by rows of stitching through two or more plies of fabric establishing the garment, are provided in the area of such garments where the seams 14—14 of the brassieres A and B occur and in which stays can be engaged to provide the garments with desired stiffness adjacent the outer sides of the cups or cup portions of the garments.

It is to be noted that the vertical stiffening means M for the band 10, whether established by a seam structure, by stays or by a combination of seams and stays, occur at the forward lateral outer quarters of the wearer's torso and at and along what will be referred to as the outer side portions of the wearer's breasts and the breast-receiving cups or cup portions of the brassieres.

It has been well established that vertical stiffening stays cannot be placed in the band portion of a brassiere laterally inward of the outer side portions of the wearer's breast without dangerous and discomforting results.

In addition to the above, the brassieres A and B include shoulder straps 35 fixed to and extending between the upper central portions of the upper edges 32 of the cups 12 and the rear end portion of the side panels 13.

The straps 35 are adapted to extend over the shoulders of the wearer and serve to hold the remainder of the brassiere structure up in desired position about the wearer's torso and relative to the wearer's breasts.

In practice, the band 10 can be established of a single piece of fabric or can be established of two, three (as described) or more pieces of fabric or panel sections, without departing from the spirit of this invention.

The reinforcing means M, referred to above, is adapted to impart a desired or necessary degree of vertical rigidity or stiffness to the band 10 of brassieres to impede or lessen the tendency of the portions of the band adjacent thereto to wrinkle and roll up when engaged about a wearer's torso.

The means M has little or no stiffening or reinforcing effect to the front portion of the band occurring laterally inwardly of said means.

The front portion or panel 11 of the band 10 is of substantial vertical extent and is adapted to establish flat, bearing engagement with the torso of the wearer across the forward portions of the wearer's ribcage and diaphragm region D, immediately beneath the wearer's breasts. The front portion or panel of the band 10 is of sufficient vertical extent so that the forces required to be applied to the wearer's body or torso beneath the breasts, to prevent the breasts from dropping and migrating downwardly behind and beneath the band is widely distributed so as to cause no discomfort and so as to prevent undesired migration, flow or movement of breast tissue beneath the band.

In the ordinary brassiere construction, with no more than the reinforcing means M described above, the portions of the front portion or front panel 11 of the band which occur below the cups 12—12 and beneath the wearer's breasts and which are intended to remain in a flat vertical plane and extended to the dotted line X (shown in FIG. 1 of the drawings), roll and/or wrinkle upwardly, as illustrated, beneath the wearer's breasts and in such a manner that the forces applied by the band are concentrated, causing discomfort to the wearer and with the result that the tissue of the wearer's breasts which starts to drop behind the band and which would otherwise be urged back, and upwardly by the flat band, moves by the restricted line of contact established by the rolled and/or wrinkled portion of the band and drop beneath the brassiere. The breast tissue caught beneath the band in such circumstances is constricted, broken down and oftentimes bruised by the band.

The present invention consists of the provision of novel, safe and effective secondary reinforcing means R for the forward breast supporting front portions of the torso engaging band of a brassiere or similar garment, which means effectively, comfortably and safely prevents rolling and/or wrinkling up of the band beneath the wearer's breasts.

The means R that I provide includes two or more, normally straight, flexible, resilient reinforcing stays 50 related to each breast or breast cup 12, arranged in vertical spaced relationship in the plane of the torso engaging band 10 of the brassiere and extending diagonally or laterally inwardly and downwardly from the vertical reinforcing means M at or adjacent the outer sides of the wearer's breasts and converging with and stopped at the lower edge 20 of the band, at laterally spaced points beneath the cups 12—12 of the brassiere and below the wearer's breasts.

The upper outer ends of the stays 50 are stopped at the vertical seams 14 or adjacent to the means M and in such a manner that they are stopped and/or prevented from shifting upwardly and outwardly from their intended position and from engagement at and with the bottom edge of the band.

The lower inner ends of the stays are suitably stopped and prevented from moving downwardly and inwardly. In the case illustrated, the lower inner ends of the stays 50 are stopped by the binding 17 at and along the lower edge 20 of the band.

In practice, the lower inner ends of the innermost stays terminate or stop about 1-½ inches from the front center of the band at points spaced laterally outward of the wearer's diaphragm and adjacent the ribcage of the wearer at opposite sides of the wearer's diaphragm. With such a relationship of parts, it will be apparent that the stays occur adjacent to the relatively rigid, and relatively immobile rib-cage of the wearer and do not project to or into the soft, tender and expanding and contracting or mobile diaphragm region of the wearer, where they might tend to poke and cause discomfort or injury.

In the case illustrated, I have shown the means R, at each side of the brassiere B comprising three stays, there being an upper stay 50, an intermediate stay 50^a and a lower stay 50^b. The upper outer ends of the stays are spaced substantially equal distances apart along the

vertical seam **14** and/or the means M related thereto and their lower inner ends are spaced substantially equal distances along the portion of the lower edge **20** of the band **10** occurring beneath their related breasts and breast cups, which portions of the band would otherwise and normally tend to roll and/or wrinkle up.

In practice, the stays are preferably established of round in cross-section, mono-filaments of flexible, resilient plastic material whereby they will readily yield and flex in all directions radially of their central axes, particularly in a horizontal plane to conform to the torso of the wearer and to a lesser degree or extent, will yield and flex in a vertical plane under the vertical loads and forces to be encountered.

The ends of the stays can be suitably rounded or otherwise dressed and/or formed to eliminate any sharp, pointed ends which might pierce and/or tear the fabric which they contact.

In the case illustrated, I have shown the stays **50, 50^a** and **50^b** arranged and retained in elongate stay sleeves **60** established in the band **10.** In FIGS. **4** and **5** of the drawings, the sleeves **60** are established by lengths of ribbon **61** material secured to the back or inner surface of the band by laterally spaced parallel rows of stitching **62.**

In practice, the stay sleeves **60** can be established in any one of a number of different ways. For example, and as shown in FIG. **8** of the drawings, where the band **10'** or the front panel **11'** thereof is established of two layers of fabric, the sleeves **60'** are established by two spaced parallel rows of stitching **62'**, through the two layers of fabric.

With the means R described above, it will be apparent that the upper outer ends of the stays **50, 50^a** and **50^b** are stopped and are held or restrained against vertical shifting relative to the band by the sleeves **60** and relative to each other by the stiffening means M, whether the means M is defined by seams such as the seams **14** or by a vertical stay, such as the stay **37** shown in FIG. **1** of the drawings. It will be further apparent that the lower inner ends of the stays **50, 50^a** and **50^b** are retained by the sleeves **60** against shifting longitudinally of the lower edge **20** of the band **10** and are held against displacement from the lower edge of the band by the binding **17.** With such a relationship of parts it will be apparent that the stays **50, 50^a** and **50^b** normally yieldingly hold the portion of the lower edge **20** of the band adjacent thereto down and yieldingly resist vertical, upward, wrinkling and/or rolling of the portion of the band across which they diagonally extend.

It is extremely important to note that the stays are not vertical, but extend diagonally downwardly and inwardly at an angle which is preferably greater than 45° from vertical. As a result of the above, the stays, with their ends fixed or stopped, are in the nature of belly springs when subjected to vertical loads or forces and while they yieldingly resist such forces, they readily yield thereto, to a sufficient extent that the band **10** is not made uncomfortably and/or dangerously stiff thereby. The stays are sufficiently soft (as springs) to permit the band to roll or wrinkle when the movement of the wearer requires such wrinkling or rolling of the band and are sufficiently resilient and stiff so that when the wearer is in normal positions, where unusual strains are not placed upon the band of the brassiere, they will yieldingly urge and hold the band in its proper, flat, extended position or condition, as shown in FIG. **2** of the drawings.

In FIG. **4** of the drawings I have shown the rear side of the front panel **11** of the brassiere B with the means R related thereto and for the purpose of illustrating a simple and convenient manner in which my invention can be embodied in a brassiere structure. But for the inclusion of the stays and stay sleeves, the panel **11** shown in FIG. **4** is identical with the precut and bound front panel element employed in establishing the brassiere shown in FIG. **1** of the drawings.

Stitching of the ribbons **61** to establish the stay sleeves and insertion of the stays into the sleeves, prior to binding of the panel **11** is a simple and economical to perform operation and establishes a sub-assembly which can be incorporated in and with the other elements and parts of the brassiere without special effort or attention.

When a sub-assembly of the nature noted above is provided, a short binding **65** can be applied to the end edges of the front panel to retain the stays.

It is important to note that the band **10** is in tension, is not subjected to compressive forces and that the stays of the means R are at angles less then 45° to the direction of tensional forces throughout the band. As a result of the above, there exists little or no possibility that the ends of the stays of the means R will poke or pierce the wearer of the brassiere under any normal and reasonable conditions and circumstances.

While the use of round in cross-section stays is preferred in carrying out my invention, stays established of rectangular in cross-section, flexible and resilient stock, such as is shown at **50', 50''** and **50'''** in FIG. **8** of the drawings can be satisfactorily employed in carrying out my invention. Such stays are preferably as thin and narrow as is practical so that an effective degree of flexibility to vertical forces and load is maintained.

In practice, and as shown in FIG. **4** of the drawings, the two portions of the upper edge **22** of the panel **11,** occurring at opposite sides of the central apex of that panel can be provided with reinforcing stays **60,** engaged within the binding **17.** Stays, such as the stays **60** have been employed by the prior art and have been found to be of considerable benefit. It will be noted that such means R that I provide will tend to enhance any benefits that are attained by stays such as the stays **60,** above.

Having described typical preferred forms of my invention, I do not wish to be limited to the specific details herein set forth but wish to reserve to myself any modifications or variations which may appear to those skilled in the art and which fall within the scope of the following claims:

Having described my invention, I claim:

1. In a brassiere structure, a torso encircling band with two laterally spaced normally flat, vertical, flexible front portions with top and bottom edges to establish flat bearing engagement with the torso of a wearer below the breasts of the wearer, breast receiving cups on the band to occur above said flat front portions and means to prevent wrinkling and rolling up of said front portions and including, a plurality of spaced elongate, normally straight resilient, flexible reinforcing stays extending diagonally upwardly and laterally outwardly from the lower edge of the band from laterally spaced points beneath each cup and terminating in the band

above the lower edge thereof and laterally outward of the cups.

2. A structure as set forth in claim **1** wherein the band has vertical reinforcing means adjacent the lateral outer sides of the cups and wherein the outer upper ends of the stays related to each cup terminate and stop at the reinforcing means related to that cup in vertical spaced relationship.

3. A structure as set forth in claim **1** wherein the lower inner ends of the stays engage and are stopped by seam and binding means at the lower edge of the band in lateral spaced relationship beneath their related cups.

4. A structure as set forth in claim **1** wherein the band has vertical reinforcing means adjacent the lateral outer sides of the ucps and wherein the outer upper ends of the stays related to each cup terminate and stop at the reinforcing means related to that cup in vertical spaced relationship, wherein the lower inner ends of the stays engage and are stopped by seam and binding means at the lower edge of the band in lateral spaced relationship beneath their related cups.

5. A structure as set forth in claim **1** wherein the stays are arranged in elongate stay receiving sleeves established in the band.

6. A structure as set forth in claim **1** wherein the stays are arranged in elongate stay receiving sleeves established in the band, said sleeves being established by laterally spaced parallel rows of stiching through two layers of fabric, at least one of which layers of fabric defines the band.

7. A structure as set forth in claim **1** wherein the band has vertical reinforcing means adjacent the lateral outer sides of the cups and wherein the outer upper ends of the stays related to each cup terminate and stop at the reinforcing means related to that cup in vertical spaced relationship, said reinforcing means defined by vertical seams and related rows of stiching established in the band adjacent the lateral outer sides of the cups.

8. A structure as set forth in claim **1** wherein the band has vertical reinforcing means adjacent the lateral outer sides of the cups and wherein the outer upper ends of the stays related to each cup terminate and stop at the reinforcing means related to that cup in vertical spaced relationship, said reinforcing means defined by vertical stays engaged in the band adjacent the lateral outer sides of the cups.

9. A structure as set forth in claim **7** wherein the lower inner ends of the stays engage and are stopped by seam and binding means at the lower edge of the band in lateral spaced relationship beneath their related cups.

10. A structure as set forth in claim **7** wherein the lower inner ends of the stays engage and are stopped by seam and binding means at the lower edge of the band in lateral spaced relationship beneath their related cups, said stays being arranged in elongate stay receiving sleeves established by laterally spaced parallel rows of stitching through two layers of fabric, at least one of which layers of fabric define the band.

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