Disclosed is a reversible garment belt with a spaced-apart keeper and buckle. In one embodiment, the present invention includes a spacer interposed between the buckle and the keeper that spans a length so as to separate the two components. Also disclosed, is a strap holder having longitudinal edges that are substantially aligned with the garment strap. The present invention provides a reversible belt that is aesthetically consistent with a traditional, non-reversible belt.
REVERSIBLE BELT BUCKLE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] Not Applicable.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY-SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not Applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] 1. Field of Invention
[0004] The present invention relates generally to a reversible belt, and more particularly to a reversible belt having a keeper spaced apart from the buckle, and a strap holder having longitudinal edges aligned with those of the garment strap so as to make the reversible belt aesthetically consistent with a traditional, non-reversible belt.

[0005] 2. Description of the Related Art
[0006] Reversible garment belts have different colors on each of their surfaces to accommodate different outfits. Frequently, reversible belts are black on one side, and brown on the other, thus enabling a user to purchase one belt that can be selectively reversed and worn with different outfits accordingly. For instance, many individuals own several pairs of pants, some of which require a brown belt and brown shoes, some of which require a black belt and black shoes, and some of which can accommodate either brown or black belts and shoes. Obviously, a reversible belt has certain financial advantages in that the user has only had to purchase a single belt, instead of two, that may be worn with a majority of that user’s pants. However, if the reversible belt has features that are aesthetically inconsistent with a traditional, non-reversible belt, those features may be felt by themselves and advertise the fact that the belt is, indeed, reversible. This can result in undesirable social implications.

[0007] Reversible garment belts have been known in the art. However, the prior art reversible belts all include a keeper disposed immediately adjacent to a buckle mechanism. This is contrary to the position of the keeper in a traditional, non-reversible belt. Furthermore, the prior art reversible belts all contain strap holders having perimeter edge panel members that define a receiving cavity for the strap member. Thus, when the belt is buckled, the perimeter edge panel members of the strap holder behind the garment strap are viewable, which is also contrary to how a traditional, non-reversible belt looks when buckled. Having a reversible belt with features that, when buckled, readily distinguish it from a non-reversible belt is not desirable.

[0008] What is needed is a reversible belt containing features that are aesthetically consistent with a traditional, non-reversible belt when buckled. Specifically, what is needed is a reversible belt with a keeper that is spaced apart from the buckle and a strap holder with longitudinal edges that are aligned with those of the garment strap.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] The above-mentioned additional features of the invention will become more clearly understood from the following detailed description of the invention read together with the drawings in which:

[0013] FIG. 1 illustrates a prior art reversible belt;
[0014] FIG. 2 illustrates a prior art reversible belt in a buckled configuration with the excess garment strap being held in the keeper;
[0015] FIG. 3 illustrates a top view of an example embodiment of the present invention;
[0016] FIG. 4 illustrates an enlarged, top view of an example embodiment of the present invention;
[0017] FIG. 5 illustrates a perspective view of an example embodiment of the present invention;
[0018] FIG. 6 illustrates a side, exploded view of an example embodiment of the present invention;
[0019] FIG. 7 illustrates a side view of an example embodiment of the present invention; and
[0020] FIG. 8 illustrates a top view of an example embodiment of the present invention in a buckled configuration with the excess garment strap being held in the keeper.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0021] The present invention, in some of its embodiments, includes a reversible garment belt having features aesthetically consistent with a traditional, non-reversible belt. Referring to FIGS. 3-8, the present invention includes an elongated garment strap 300 having opposed surfaces and opposed ends. One end 301 of the garment strap 300 can include
longitudinally spaced holes 302 extending approximately a quarter of the way up the garment strap. The other end 303 typically has no longitudinally spaced holes.

[0022] Garment straps 300 can include numerous features that provide various visual effects. For instance, garment straps can have cut edges, where each longitudinal edge of the garment strap has been formed by a blade cutting the garment strap from a wider piece of starting material. Cut-edged garment straps generally remain consistent in thickness across the transverse axis of the garment strap. Contrastingly, feathered-edged belts are generally made from joining two pieces of material along both longitudinal edges. This produces a garment strap having a longitudinal middle portion that is thicker than the edges of the strap. Additionally, stitching can be included along either of the longitudinal edges of either cut-edged or feather-edged garment straps.

[0023] Garment straps can also be made from a wide variety of materials. For instance, leather has been the most popular material for belts; however, cotton, elastomeric fabrics, and even hemp have also been commercially successful. Furthermore, some garment straps are made from two exterior pieces of material with a third piece of material interposed therebetween.

[0024] The size of a given garment strap may also be varied. Just as pants are made with different waist sizes to accommodate differently sized individuals, garment straps for belts come in different lengths to accommodate the same. Widths, on the other hand, need not be varied to accommodate differently sized individuals, but rather are often varied to achieve different, style-specific effects. Because the typical belt loop on a man’s trouser is an inch and a half, men’s garment straps are typically between thirty and fifty millimeters in width.

[0025] In the illustrated embodiments, the present invention includes a leather garment strap 300 that is thirty millimeters in width 402A and has feathered, stitched longitudinal edges 401A, 401B. Importantly, however, the present inventive concept may be achieved with any type of garment strap 300. Regardless of how the edges 401A, 401B of the garment strap 300 have been cut, the width 402A of the garment strap, or from what material the strap is made, the present inventive concept can include any type of garment strap 300. Thus any and all features pertaining to the garment strap 300, described herein, are non-limiting.

[0026] Connected to the garment strap end 303 opposite the longitudinally spaced holes 302 can be a strap holder 311. The strap holder 311 is generally metal or synthetic plastic and can be fabricated by machining, casting, injection molding, or the like. The strap holder 311 can best be described as having a U-shaped profile with two, parallel, substantially planar panel members 601A, 601B extending from a perpendicular end panel member 602. The strap holder 311 is designed to house the end 303 of a garment strap 300 inside the receiving cavity 603, which is defined by the interior of the three panel members 601A, 601B, 602.

[0027] The lateral edge 600 of the garment strap end 303 is placed in the strap holder’s receiving cavity 603. Both parallel panel members 601A, 601B superpose the inserted garment strap end 303. In some embodiments, two screws 404A, 404B penetrate either or both of the parallel panel members 601A, 601B and the garment strap 300 to secure the garment strap end 303 inside the receiving cavity 603 of the strap holder 311. It will be understood by those of skill in the art that the specific means for securing the garment strap end 303 in the strap holder 311 is not limited to the two screws 404A, 404B disclosed herein. On the contrary, other conventional methods of securing the garment strap end 303 in the strap holder 311 can be practiced without deviating from the scope or spirit of the general present inventive concept.

[0028] In the exemplary embodiment, the upper and lower edges 403A, 403B of both parallel panel members 601A, 601B on the strap holder 311 are substantially aligned with the edges 401A, 401B of the secured garment strap 300. This is contrary to the prior art reversible belts, which generally have a strap holder containing a receiving cavity defined by five panel members. Referring now to FIGS. 1-2, the prior art reversible belts typically contain a strap holder 111 with perimeter side panel members 115A, 115B connected to the parallel panel members, in addition to the end panel member. These perimeter side panel members 115A, 115B create excess material, relative to the width 102 of the garment strap 100, which can be seen behind the superposed garment strap end 200 when the belt is being used, as shown in FIG. 2. This seemingly minor detail calls attention to itself and advertises that the belt is reversible. Contrastingly, in the embodiments of the present invention illustrated by FIGS. 3-8, the lack of perimeter side panels permits the strap holder 311 to have a width 402A that is substantially equal to the width 402A of the secured garment strap 300. Thus, when the belt is in use and the excess garment strap end 301 is put through the keeper’s 312 passageway 703 and superposed on top of the garment strap holder 311, the garment strap holder 311 will be unseen, as illustrated in FIG. 8.

[0029] Attached to the garment strap holder 311, distal the garment strap 300, can be a keeper 312. In some embodiments, the keeper includes a base portion 501 and a loop portion 502. The keeper’s base portion 501 can be substantially planar and span a width 405 that is slightly longer than the width 402A of the garment strap 300 and width 402B of the strap holder 311. In some embodiments, the thickness of the base member 604B is substantially equal to the length dimension 604A of the strap holder’s end panel member 602. The loop portion 502 extends from both ends of the base portion 501. The resulting passageway 703 created from this interaction is preferably just wide enough for the garment strap 300 to penetrate. The keeper 312 is generally metal or plastic and can be fabricated by machining, casting, injection molding, or the like. The base portion 501 and loop portion 502 of the keeper 312 are preferably integrally formed. In some embodiments, a double keeper (not illustrated) is used. Stated differently, the keeper 312 can include two loop portions spanning the width of the base portion 501, as opposed to one loop portion 502.

[0030] The reversible nature of the present invention can be facilitated by the strap holder 311 being pivotably and rotationally connected to the keeper 312, proximate the strap holder’s end panel member 602. In some embodiments, a cylindrical attachment member 606 surrounded by a spring member 607 penetrates the end panel member 602 from the strap holder’s receiving cavity 603, and also penetrates the exterior of the proximal side of the keeper 312, thereby permitting the strap holder 311 and keeper 312 to each independently rotate around the cylindrical attachment member 606. The spring member 607 is biased to force the strap holder 311 and keeper 312 to remain in a substantially abutting relationship whenever they are not being pulled apart from one another. Two transverse flanges 605A, 605B are disposed on the exterior of the end panel member 602 of the strap holder 311, proximate the keeper 312 and on either side of the
cylindrical attachment member 606, and cooperate with a recessed cavity (not illustrated) on the exterior of the keeper’s base portion 501, proximate the strap holder 311. The cooperation of the flanges 605A, 605B and cavity, in conjunction with the spring member 607, provides for the pivotable nature of the reversing mechanism. One of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the disclosed reversing mechanism is well known in the art. Accordingly, the present discussion of pivotable, reversible attachment is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention in any way. Other known methods of pivotable, reversible attachment may be readily substituted for that which is disclosed herein without deviating from the scope or spirit of the present general inventive concept.

[0031] Attached to the keeper 312, distal the strap holder 311, can be a spacer 313. The spacer 313 can be generally planar and substantially equal in width 402C to the strap holder and garment strap. In some embodiments, the thickness 604C of the spacer 313 is substantially equal to the thickness 604B of the keeper’s 312 base member 501 and the length dimension 604A of the strap holder’s end panel member 602. In some embodiments, the spacer is generally metal or plastic and can be fabricated by machining, casting, injection molding, or the like. In other embodiments, the spacer is made of material similar to that of the garment strap 300. The spacer 313 can be integrally formed with the keeper 312 or it can be separately formed and either releasably or non-releasably attached thereto.

[0032] In the example embodiment, the spacer’s exterior surface is covered with the same material as that which covers the exterior surface on at least one side of the garment strap 300. In some embodiments, the spacer is covered with black leather, which matches one of the sides of the garment strap 300. In other embodiments, however, the spacer is covered with a different material than that on the exterior of the garment strap 300. In yet other embodiments, the spacer 313 is not covered with any material.

[0033] In some embodiments, the actual spacer’s 313 width and thickness dimensions are slightly smaller in order to accommodate an exterior material. Thus, the spacer 313 achieves the desired width and thickness with the exterior material so as to be aligned with the other components. Stated differently, after installing the exterior material to the spacer, the spacer’s width 402C is substantially equal to the width 402A of the garment strap 300 and the width 402B of the strap holder 311; the spacer’s thickness 604C is substantially equal to the thickness 604B of the base portion 501 of the keeper 312 and the length dimension 604A of the strap holder’s 311 end panel member 602.

[0034] Traditional, non-reversible belts typically contain a keeper disposed at a distance away from the buckle. Prior art reversible belts, as shown in FIGS. 1-2, however, typically contain a keeper 112 disposed immediately adjacent to a buckle 114, thus exposing the fact that the belt is reversible. Contrastingly, the spacer 313 in the present invention, included in the illustrated embodiments of FIGS. 3-8, conforms the aesthetic appearance of the present invention to that of a traditional, non-reversible belt by separating the keeper 313 and buckle 114. In some embodiments, the spacer’s 313 length dimension 410 approximates its width 402C. In other embodiments, the spacer’s 313 length dimension 410 is at least fifty (50) percent of the width 402A of the garment strap 300. In yet other embodiments, the spacer’s length 410 is substantially equal to the width 405 of the keeper 312. In the illustrated embodiment, the spacer 313 spans a length 410 of twenty-five (25) millimeters.

[0035] Attached to the spacer 313, distal the keeper 312, can be a buckle 314. The buckle 314 in the illustrated embodiment is a standard buckle and can be substituted for other buckles bearing different sizes, shapes, or designs without deviating from the scope or spirit of the general present inventive concept. In some embodiments, the buckle 314 and the spacer 313 are integrally formed. In other embodiments, the buckle 314 and spacer 313 are inseparably attached, and in yet other embodiments, the buckle 314 and spacer 313 are releasably attached.

[0036] In some embodiments, the buckle 314, the keeper 312, and the strap holder 311 each have a silver roller tumbler polish finish. In other embodiments, the buckle 314, the keeper 312, and the strap holder 311 each have different finishes. One of skill in the art will recognize that the specific finishes on each component can be substituted without deviating from the scope or spirit of the present general inventive concept.

[0037] In sum, the exemplary embodiment of the present invention has features that differentiate it from prior art reversible belts and make it aesthetically consistent with traditional, non-reversible belts. First, the buckle 314 and keeper 312 are spaced apart from one another. This spacing is critical in that traditional, non-reversible belts do not contain a keeper immediately adjacent to a buckle. Further, the strap holder 311 on the present invention can have aligned longitudinal edges 403A, 403B with the garment strap 300. Traditional, non-reversible belts do not include a strap holder, because the strap typically extends all the way to the buckle without the need for a reversing mechanism. However, a reversible belt must have a strap holder 311 to facilitate a reversing mechanism. Aligning the longitudinal edges 403A, 403B of the strap holder 311 with those of the garment strap 300 enables the strap holder 311 to be hidden when the belt is buckled, as shown in FIG. 8, by virtue of the garment strap end 301 being held in the keeper 312 and superposed over the strap holder 311.

[0038] While the present invention has been illustrated by description of some embodiments, and while the illustrative embodiments have been described in detail, it is not the intention of the applicant to restrict or in any way limit the scope of the appended claims to such detail. Additional modifications will readily appear to those skilled in the art. The invention in its broader aspects is therefore not limited to the specific details, representative apparatus and methods, and illustrative examples shown and described. Accordingly, departures may be made from such details without departing from the spirit or scope of applicant’s general inventive concept.

What is claimed is:

1. A reversible garment belt comprising:
   an elongated garment strap, said garment strap having two ends and two longitudinal edges;
   a keeper reversibly connected to a first end of said garment strap;
   a spacer connected to said keeper distal said garment strap; and
   a buckle connected to said spacer distal said keeper;
   wherein said spacer has a length dimension that separates said buckle from said keeper.

2. The reversible garment belt of claim 1 further comprising:
a strap holder, said strap holder receiving said first end of said garment strap and pivotably and rotatably connecting to said keeper, said strap holder having longitudinal edges which are substantially aligned with said longitudinal edges of said garment strap.

3. A reversible garment belt comprising:
an elongated garment strap, said garment strap including two opposed ends, a top surface, and a bottom surface, said garment strap having two longitudinal edges between said two ends and a width dimension between said two longitudinal edges;
a strap holder including a top panel member having two longitudinal edges, a bottom panel member having two longitudinal edges, and an end panel member, said strap holder designed to receive one end of said garment strap and secure said garment strap end between said top and bottom panel members, said top and bottom panel members having a width dimension substantially equal to said width of said garment strap, said end panel member having a length dimension;
a keeper pivotably and rotatably attached to said strap holder so as to allow the reversal of said top and bottom surfaces of said garment strap relative to said keeper, said keeper having a base portion and a loop portion connected along a width dimension; a buckle; and
a spacer interposed between and attached to said buckle and said keeper, said spacer being substantially planar along a length and width dimension.

4. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said garment strap is approximately thirty (30) millimeters in width.

5. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said garment strap has a leather exterior.

6. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said garment strap has feathered edges.

7. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said garment strap has cut edges.

8. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said spacer is covered with material comprising the exterior of said garment strap.

9. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said longitudinal edges of said strap holder’s top and bottom panel members are substantially aligned with said longitudinal edges of said garment strap.

10. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said spacer is substantially equal in width to the width of the garment strap and strap holder.

11. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said keeper is wider than said garment strap and said strap holder.

12. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said base portion of said keeper has a thickness that is substantially equal to said length dimension of said end panel member.

13. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said spacer has a thickness that is substantially equal to said length dimension of said strap holder’s end panel member.

14. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said length dimension of said spacer is substantially equal to at least fifty (50) percent of said width of said garment strap.

15. The reversible garment belt of claim 10, wherein said length dimension of said spacer is substantially equal to at least fifty (50) percent of its width.

16. The reversible garment belt of claim 11, wherein the length dimension of said spacer is substantially equal to said width of said keeper.

17. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said spacer and said garment strap are made of the same material.

18. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said strap holder, said keeper, and said buckle each have a silver roller tumbler polish finish.

19. The reversible garment belt of claim 3, wherein said keeper includes two loop portions.

20. A reversible garment belt comprising:
an elongated garment strap including two ends, a top surface, and a bottom surface, said garment strap having two longitudinal edges between said two ends and a width dimension between said two longitudinal edges;
a strap holder including a top panel member having two longitudinal edges, a bottom panel member having two longitudinal edges, and an end panel member connecting said top and bottom panel members, said end panel member having a length dimension, said strap holder designed to receive one end of said garment strap and secure said garment strap end between said top and bottom panel members, said longitudinal edges of said top and bottom panel members being substantially aligned with said longitudinal edges of said garment strap;
a keeper pivotably and rotatably connected to said garment strap holder proximate said end panel member, said keeper including a base portion and a loop portion, said base portion having a thickness that is substantially equal to said length dimension of said strap holder’s end panel member; a buckle; and
a spacer interposed between and attached to said buckle and said keeper, said spacer being substantially planar along a length and width dimension, said width dimension being substantially equal to said width of said garment strap, said length dimension being substantially equal to at least fifty (50) percent of said width dimension of said garment strap, said spacer having a thickness that is substantially equal to said length dimension of said strap holder’s end panel member.

* * * * *