

THIS OPINION WAS NOT WRITTEN FOR PUBLICATION

The opinion in support of the decision being entered today (1) was not written for publication in a law journal and (2) is not binding precedent of the Board.

Paper No. 22

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte DONALD L. PURINTON and LOUIS R. SEMFF

Appeal No. 97-1417
Application No. 08/273,040¹

ON BRIEF

Before JOHN D. SMITH, HANLON, and ROBINSON, Administrative Patent Judges.

HANLON, Administrative Patent Judge.

DECISION ON APPEAL

This is an appeal under 35 U.S.C. § 134 from the final rejection of claims 1-19 and 21, all of the claims pending in the application. Claim 1 is illustrative of the subject matter on appeal and reads as follows:

1. A radome comprising:
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¹ Application for patent filed July 8, 1994.

Appeal No. 97-1417
Application No. 08/273,040

(a) an exterior wall, said wall including:

(i) a central region of porous material comprising a ceramic material impregnated with an inorganic resin and having a pair of opposing exterior surfaces; and

(ii) a skin overlying each of said opposing surfaces to form a composite structure, said skin comprising a first cloth of ceramic material impregnated with an inorganic resin which, under pyrolysis, provides an elemental carbon-free material and, with increased temperature, gradually converts from the liquid state to a resilient state and then to a solid state by about 1200°F.

The references relied upon by the examiner are:

Boyd et al. (Boyd)	5,134,421	Jul. 28,
1992		
Liimatta et al. (Liimatta)	5,198,152	Mar. 30,
1993		

The sole issue on appeal is whether the examiner properly rejected claims 1-19 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the combination of Boyd and Liimatta.

Discussion

Claim 1 is directed to a radome comprising an exterior wall including:

(1) a central region of porous material comprising a ceramic material impregnated with an inorganic resin and having a pair of opposing exterior surfaces; and

Appeal No. 97-1417
Application No. 08/273,040

(2) a skin overlying each of the opposing surfaces whereby the skin comprises a ceramic material impregnated with an inorganic resin which, under pyrolysis, provides an elemental carbon-free material and, with increased temperature, gradually converts from the liquid state to a resilient state and then to a solid state by about 1200EF. The inorganic resin is preferably a polysilazane or a polysiloxane (Specification, p.3).

According to the examiner (Answer, p.3):

Boyd et al discloses a radome comprising a honeycomb or foam layer laminated with face sheets of resin impregnated-fiber reinforced material and the use of ceramic materials for these layers; see column 2, lines 18-40 and the paragraph bridging columns 5 and 6. However, Boyd et al do not disclose the particular claimed materials used to form the fiber reinforced layers Liimatta et al discloses the use of polysilizane [sic, polysilazane] materials as an infiltrant in ceramic fiber reinforced composites which may be used in radomes; see column 1, lines 13-18 and 49-50, column 2, lines 65-67 and column 4, lines 42-49.

The examiner continues (Answer, p.4):

Ii [sic, It] is the examiner's position that since Liimatta et al disclose the same impregnate as that disclosed by appellant, namely polysilizane [sic, polysilazane], that the claimed property under

Appeal No. 97-1417
Application No. 08/273,040

pyrolysis is inherent in the Liimatta et al impregnate.

However, appellants argue that the polysilazanes in Liimatta are not the same as those claimed. More specifically (Brief, pp.5-6):

Claim 1 requires a skin comprising a first cloth of ceramic material impregnated with an inorganic resin which, under pyrolysis, provides an elemental carbon-free material and, with increased temperature, gradually converts from the liquid state to a resilient state and then to a solid state by about 1200°F. Even further, nowhere in Liimatta et al. is there a teaching or even a suggestion that the materials taught therein are limited to those "which, under pyrolysis, provides an elemental carbon-free material and, with increased temperature, gradually converts from the liquid state to a resilient state and then to a solid state by about 1200°F". [Emphasis added.]

Manifestly, the resins disclosed in Liimatta are organic. According to Liimatta, the disclosed invention is directed to (Abstract):

A crosslinkable preceramic composition suitable for use as an infiltrant for porous ceramics, such as fiber-reinforced ceramic composites, comprises about 75-99% by weight of a low molecular weight polysilazane and about 1-25% by weight of an unsaturated organic or organosilicon compound containing at least two alkenyl groups, preferably methylvinylcyclosilazane.

Appeal No. 97-1417
Application No. 08/273,040

The examiner has failed to explain how the organic compositions disclosed in Liimatta provide an elemental carbon-free material under pyrolysis. Absent a more factually specific statement of the rejection, we cannot sustain the rejection of claims 1-19 and 21² under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the combination of Boyd and Liimatta. See In re Oetiker, 977 F.2d 1443, 1445, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1444 (Fed. Cir. 1992) (the examiner bears the initial burden of presenting a prima facie case of unpatentability).

Based on the record before us, the decision of the examiner is reversed.

REVERSED

² Claims 2-19 and 21 are dependent on independent claim 1. See 37 CFR § 1.75(c) ("Claims in dependent form shall be construed to include all the limitations of the claim incorporated by reference into the dependent claim.").

Appeal No. 97-1417
Application No. 08/273,040

JOHN D. SMITH)	
Administrative Patent Judge)	
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)	BOARD OF PATENT
ADRIENE LEPIANE HANLON)	APPEALS
Administrative Patent Judge)	AND
)	INTERFERENCES
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Appeal No. 97-1417
Application No. 08/273,040

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Appeal No. 97-1417
Application No. 08/273,040

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APJ ROBINSON

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DECISION:
Send Reference(s): Yes No
or Translation (s)
Panel Change: Yes No
Index Sheet-2901 Rejection(s): _____

Prepared: April 13, 2000

Draft Final

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OB/HD GAU

PALM / ACTS 2 / BOOK
DISK (FOIA) / REPORT