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the dielectric material of the housing in these narrowed portions of the cavities. In essence, the wider spring contact legs 34 provide a wider area for engagement by the male terminals, and the spring contact terminals can be stamped from a given width of material with narrower portion of the supporting leg 28 between the spring contact leg 34 and first pair of barbs which do not project outwardly a distance which is greater than the distance between sidewalls 21 which define the bounds of cavities 20.

It will be understood that the invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or central characteristics thereof. The present examples and embodiments, therefore, are to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, and the invention is not to be limited to the details given herein.

We claim:

1. In an electrical connector system which includes a first connector assembly having an insulative housing defining a cavity with a thin male terminal extending thereinto, and a second connector assembly having an insulative housing defining a cavity with a spring contact terminal located therein, the thin male terminal being engageable with the spring contact terminal upon mating of the connector assemblies, wherein the improvement comprises said first connector assembly including a supporting wall for supporting one side of the thin male terminal and extending only partially along the length of the male terminal to leave an unsupported distal end of the terminal, said second connector assembly including a preloading wall against which the spring contact terminal is biased for preloading the spring contact terminal, and the distal end of said thin male terminal being insertable between the spring contact terminal and the preloading wall, with the preloading wall supporting the distal end of the male terminal on said one side thereof, upon mating of the connector assemblies, whereby the supporting wall of the first connector assembly and the preloading wall of the second connector assembly combine to provide support along a substantial length of the thin male terminal.

2. In an electrical connector system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said supporting wall and said preloading wall have distal ends which are in close proximity to each other when the connector assemblies are mated, whereby the walls combine to provide support for the thin male terminal along substantially the entire length thereof.

3. In an electrical connector system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said supporting wall of the first connector assembly comprises a partition between a pair of said cavities into which a pair of said thin male terminals respectively extend, and said preloading wall of the second connector assembly comprises a partition between a pair of said cavities in which a pair of said spring contact terminals respectively are located.

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4. In an electrical connector system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said thin male terminal comprises a stamped and formed component of sheet metal material.

5. In an electrical connector system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said preloading wall is dimensioned so that the distal end thereof engages and supports the distal end of the male terminal prior to engagement of the male terminal with the spring contact terminal during mating of the connector assemblies.

6. An electrical connector system, comprising:

a first connector assembly including an elongated insulative housing defining at least a pair of rows of cavities longitudinally thereof for mounting a plurality of thin male terminals respectively extending into the cavities, the housing having a supporting partition wall extending longitudinally thereof between the transverse rows of cavities, the partition wall supporting opposing sides of the thin male terminals and extending only partially along the length of the male terminals to leave unsupported distal ends of the terminals; and

a second connector assembly having an elongated insulative housing defining at least two rows of transverse cavities with a plurality of spring contact terminals respectively located therein, the spring contact terminals being engageable by the thin male terminals upon mating of the connector assemblies, the housing of the second connector assembly including a preloading partition wall extending lengthwise thereof and between the transverse cavities, with the spring contact terminals being biased against the preloading partition wall for preloading the spring contact terminals, and wherein the distal ends of the male terminals are insertable between the spring contact terminals and the preloading wall upon mating of the connector assemblies, the preloading partition wall being configured for supporting the distal ends of the male terminals on said sides thereof before the male terminals engage the spring contact terminals, whereby the supporting partition wall of the first connector assembly and the preloading partition wall of the second connector assembly combine to provide support along a substantial length of the male terminals during mating of the connector assemblies.

7. The electrical connector system of claim 6 wherein said thin male terminals comprise stamped and formed components of sheet metal material.

8. The electrical connector system of claim 6 wherein said supporting partition wall and said preloading partition wall are configured to have distal ends which are in close proximity to each other when the connector assemblies are mated, whereby the walls combine to provide support for the thin male terminals along substantially the entire length thereof.

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