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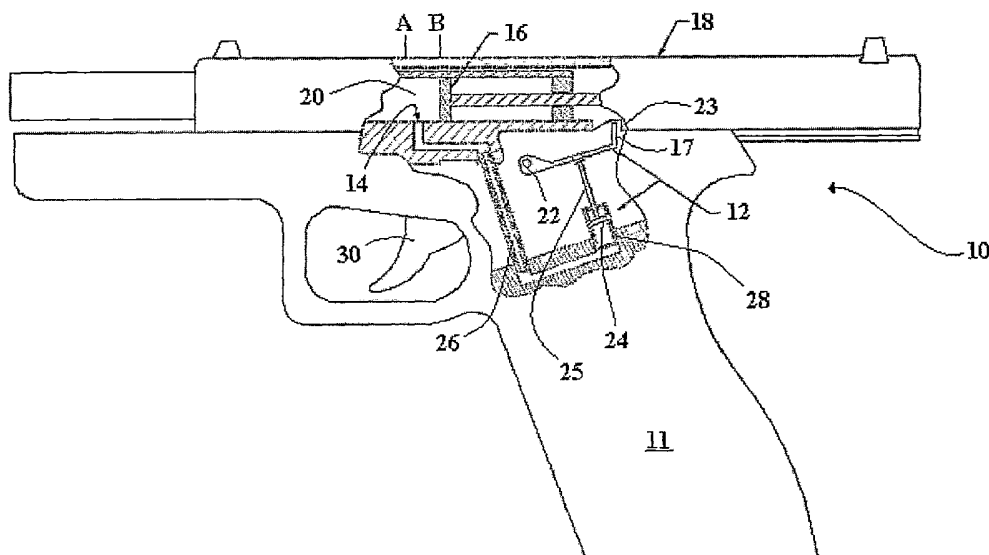
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- Published:**
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(54) Title: LOCKING ASSEMBLY FOR FIREARM RECOIL SIMULATOR



(57) Abstract: A bolt locking assembly (12) for a weapon simulator (10), the weapon simulator (10) having a bolt (18) affixed to a firearm housing (11) providing recoil to the user. The bolt (18) is connected to a piston (16) housed in a piston chamber (20) inside the housing (11). A gas supply (2) provides a compressed gas or fluid into the piston chamber (20) to generate movement and recoil of the piston (16). After the weapon simulator (10) has been fired a predetermined number of times, the bolt locking assembly (12) will obstruct operation of the bolt (18) and piston (16). The bolt locking assembly (12) includes a lock actuator port (14) engaging the piston chamber (20), a locking apparatus positioned within the housing (11) proximate the bolt (18), and a lock actuator port (26) between said lock actuator port (14) and said locking arm (17), wherein the lock actuator port (26) directs gas to said locking apparatus to actuate said locking apparatus and fix the bolt (18) in place.

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PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

REC'D 02 SEP 2004	
WIPO	PCT

Applicant's or agent's file reference 29260.013PCT	FOR FURTHER ACTION	see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.
International application No. PCT/US03/25118	International filing date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 11 August 2003 (11.08.2003)	(Earliest) Priority Date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 11 August 2003 (11.08.2003)
Applicant FATS, INC.		

This international search report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This international search report consists of a total of 2 sheets.

It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

1. Basis of the Report

a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).

b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

contained in the international application in written form.

filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

2. **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).

3. **Unity of invention is lacking** (See Box II).

4. With regard to the **title**,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

LOCKING ASSEMBLY FOR FIREARM RECOIL SIMULATOR

5. With regard to the **abstract**,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the **drawings** to be published with the abstract is Figure No. 1

as suggested by the applicant.

None of the figures

because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

because this figure better characterizes the invention.

LOCKING ASSEMBLY FOR FIREARM SIMULATORS

[0001] The present invention relates to firearms and firearm simulators and, more particularly, to a means for locking a bolt of a firearm simulator.

Background Art

5 [0002] Because of the lethal characteristics inherent in operating guns, proper training in their use is imperative. Such training often involves the firing of blanks or live ammunition. Load noise, spent cartridge waste, noxious burned powder odors, repetitive reloading, environmental constraints, high cost and overall danger are all substantial detriments to the use of blanks or live ammunition.

10 [0003] To overcome the above disadvantages, training devices have evolved for simulating the firing of guns. These devices relate to weaponry having primarily military use. U.S. Pat. No. 4,302,190 discloses a rifle recoil simulator whereby compressed air passes through orifices in the rifle barrel to force the barrel upward in a recoil motion. A trigger switch activates an electronic timer-solenoid-air valve system for controlling air
15 passage to the barrel orifices.

 [0004] Artillery loading and recoil simulators are described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,194,304 and 4,365,959. These are complex mechanisms designed to train entire gunnery crews. They are not directly related to firearm recoil, which is the subject of the present invention.

20 [0005] To improve the realism of the weapons familiarization process and to provide a more “lifelike” experience, a variety of approaches have been suggested to make the weapons range more realistic. For example, some weapons ranges provide paper targets with threatening images rather than bull’s-eye targets. In attempts to present a more realistic scenario to the participant and to provide an interactive and immersive
25 experience, some weapons ranges have replaced such fixed targets with moving or “pop-up” targets such as spring-loaded mechanical images or animated video images projected onto a display screen. The pop-up or animated images present moving targets and/or simulated return threats toward which the participant fires. One problem with such an approach is that the bullets damage or destroy the target. For example, the bullets can
30 punch holes through display screens, eventually rendering the screens inoperative.

Further, use of live ammunition can be very dangerous, especially in unfamiliar training exercises where the participant's performance limits are tested.

[0006] To address such problems, some training ranges use non-lethal ammunition, such as projectiles propelled by air cartridges in place of conventional bullets. One type of non-lethal ammunition is a Crown Type E air cartridge. In conventional uses of such cartridges, a releasable cap attaches to the cartridge and covers an outlet port. Then, when the outlet port is opened, a highly pressurized gas is released from the cartridge and propels the releasable cap away from the cartridge at a high velocity. The cap travels through a gun barrel and is emitted from the gun as a non-lethal projectile. To detect the impact locations of the non-lethal projectile, some such ranges use some type of projectile tracking device, such as high-speed imaging equipment. Such ranges can be very expensive due to their complexity and use of specialized equipment.

[0007] Other ranges allow the non-lethal ammunition to penetrate or otherwise mark a target object to indicate impact location. Such ranges have the drawback that the non-lethal ammunition is destructive. Additionally, the impact locations are difficult to track on a "real-time" basis, which makes interactive ranges difficult. Also, while such approaches may improve visual approximations of actual situations as compared to paper targets, such approaches lack a visual or other virtually instantaneous feedback indicating the effectiveness of the participant's fire.

[0008] Another alternative type of weapons range employs a light beam in place of a projectile. In such ranges, the participant holds a simulated weapon shaped like a conventional weapon that is activated by a switch coupled to a conventionally shaped and positioned trigger. When the participant pulls the trigger, the simulated weapon emits a light beam that strikes the target, causing an illuminated spot. An optical detector detects the spot and indicates the impact location.

[0009] Such simulated weapons lack a realistic feel because they do not recoil in response to the simulated fire. Moreover, the simulated weapons do not emit shells that can distract the participant and can affect the participant's footing.

[0010] To try to simulate an actual weapon's recoil, a compressed air line can be coupled to the simulated weapon. Then, when the trigger is pulled, an air driven mechanism applies a pulse of force to the simulated weapon to produce a simulated recoil.

Such a system has the drawback that the air line acts as a tether, limiting the participant's mobility and affecting aim. The system also lacks the ejected shells of actual or non-lethal ammunition.

[0011] The prior art attempts, including those described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,947,738 5,569,085, 4,480,999, and 4,678,437, to simulate recoil have limitations and drawbacks as discussed above in addition to being tethered to a console, lack of proper feel and balance, and related problems, all of which are solved by the present invention.

[0012] More particularly, in order to simulate a locked, out-of-ammunition situation, the weapon simulators have utilized a dedicated slide/bolt lock valve to control the slide or bolt lock mechanism. That is, during a normal firing cycle, only the recoil valve is energized to actuate the recoil cycle. However, during the final firing cycle, both the recoil valve and slide/bolt lock valves are actuated, such that the slide/bolt lock valve will lock the bolt of the weapon simulator to temporarily prevent further operation of the weapon simulator.

15

Disclosure of the Invention

The present invention is a bolt locking assembly for a weapon simulator. The weapon simulator includes a bolt affixed to a firearm housing providing recoil to the user. The bolt is connected to a piston housed in a piston chamber inside the housing. A gas supply provides a compressed gas or fluid into the piston chamber to generate movement and recoil of the piston. After the weapon simulator has been fired a predetermined number of times, the bolt locking assembly will block operation of the bolt and piston.

20

The bolt locking assembly includes a lock actuator port engaging the piston chamber, a locking apparatus positioned within the housing proximate the bolt, and a lock channel between said lock actuator port and said locking arm, wherein the lock channel directs gas to said locking apparatus to actuate said locking apparatus and fix the bolt in place.

25

Brief Description Of Drawings

[0013] Figure 1 is a partial sectional side view of the weapon simulator having a bolt locking assembly of the present invention; and

[0014] Figure 2 is a block diagram of the distribution of a gas or liquid from a gas supply to the bolt locking assembly of the present invention.

Description of the Best Mode

[0015] Referring to Figures 1 and 2, the present invention of a bolt locking assembly 12 for a firearm or weapon simulator 10 is illustrated. As shown, the weapon simulator 10 incorporates a regulated gas supply 2 with a pilot valve 4 and recoil valve 6 to cycle the weapon simulator 10 and actuate a slide or bolt 18 of the weapon simulator 10 upon the firing of the weapon simulator 10 by a user. The action of the bolt 18 is sufficient to generate substantial recoil for the user to imitate the actual use of a conventional firearm. Specifically, the weapon simulator 10 includes a piston 16 that is housed within a piston chamber 20, with the piston 16 being connected through the housing 11 to the bolt 18 of the weapon simulator 10. When fired, the gas supply 2 will provide a gas flow within the piston chamber 20 to create a forceful movement of the piston 16 within the piston chamber 20. This movement of the piston 16 will simultaneously generate movement of the bolt 18 to create recoil.

[0016] The bolt locking assembly 12 of the present invention is used in conjunction with the weapon simulator 10 to provide a simple means for locking the bolt 18 using the gas supply 2 directed to creating recoil in the weapon simulator 10. That is, the weapon simulator 10 includes the bolt locking assembly 12 that is controlled by the same pilot valve 4 and gas supply 2 that controls the recoil operation of the bolt 18 of the weapon simulator 10. As a result, the need for a separate slide/bolt lock valve as required in other weapon simulator designs described above is eliminated, thus further reducing the number of components needed for realistic operation of the weapon simulator 10.

[0017] The bolt locking assembly 12 includes a lock actuator port 14 that is connected to a locking apparatus via a lock channel 26. The locking apparatus preferably includes a locking arm 17 that is pivotally mounted within the housing 11 on a pivot pin 22 and means for actuating the locking arm 17. The actuating means of the present invention include an actuating arm 25, an actuating plate 24, and a plate chamber 28, although it is foreseen that other actuating designs may be incorporated. Continuing to view Figure 1, the actuating arm 25 is connected to the locking arm 17, with the actuating plate 24 attached to the opposite end of the locking arm 17. The actuating plate 24 is

slidably mounted within a plate chamber 28 that is connected via lock channel 26 to a lock actuator port 14. The lock actuator port 14 is further opens to the piston chamber 20.

5 [0018] In operation, the user engages a switch 30, such as a conventional firearm trigger, to prompt the firing of the weapon simulator 10. A recoil valve 6 allows a compressed gas or fluid to flow inside the piston chamber 20 to force the bolt 18 toward the user of the weapon simulator 10, thereby generating recoil by the weapon simulator 10. In such cases, the piston 16 will generally travel in the piston chamber 20 to position A.

10 [0019] A sensor, controller or other related component will monitor the number of times the weapon simulator 10 is fired. Once the weapon simulator 10 has been fired a predetermined number of times, the bolt locking assembly 12 will be set in operation. In particular, the recoil valve 6 will remain open for a preset amount of time, such that the compressed gas or fluid from the gas supply 2 will force the piston 16 to travel in the piston chamber 20 to position B, past the bolt lock actuator port 14. Once the piston 16 is beyond the lock actuator port 14, the gas applying a force on the piston 16 will flow from the piston chamber 20 through the lock actuator port 14 and lock channel 26 into the plate chamber 28. Furthermore, the compressed gas will apply pressure to the actuating plate 24, thereby concomitantly driving the actuator arm 25. The actuator arm 25 will thereby pivot the locking arm 17 about the pivot pin 22 such the locking arm 17 will be proximate a shoulder 23 of the bolt 18. As the recoil valve 6 closes, the bolt 18 will be drawn back to the original resting position, and the shoulder 23 will engage the locking arm 17. Once the shoulder 23 of the bolt 18 engages the locking arm 17, the bolt 18 will be locked in place, wherein the locking arm 17 will prevent the bolt 18 from returning to its original resting position with respect to the housing 11.

25 [0020] The bolt 18 will remain in the locked position until the user takes action to unlock the bolt 18. While the bolt 18 is locked, the firearm simulator 10 will be inoperable, as with an actual firearm. However, once the user either resets the bolt 18 or takes some additional action, the weapon simulator 10 will be operable once again.

30 [0021] Thus, although there have been described particular embodiments of the present invention of a new and useful LOCKING ASSEMBLY FOR FIREARM

SIMULATORS, it is not intended that such references be construed as limitations upon the scope of this invention except as set forth in the following claims.

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A bolt locking assembly (12) for use in a weapon simulator (10) having a bolt (18) affixed to a housing (11), the bolt (18) connected to a piston (16) housed in a piston chamber (20), and a gas supply (2) forcing gas into the piston chamber (20) to generate movement of the piston (16), wherein the bolt locking assembly (12) is characterized by:

a lock actuator port (14) in the piston chamber (20);

a lock apparatus positioned within the housing (11) proximate the bolt (18);

10 and

a lock actuator port (26) between said lock actuator port (14) and said locking arm (17), said lock actuator port (26) directing gas to said locking apparatus.

2. The bolt locking assembly (12) as described in claim 1, wherein said locking apparatus is characterized by:

15 a locking arm (17); and

actuating means for moving said locking arm (17), said actuating means connected to said locking arm (17).

3. The bolt locking assembly (12) as described in claim 2, wherein said actuating means is characterized by:

20 an actuating arm (25) connected to said locking arm (17);

an actuating plate (24) attached to said actuating arm (25); and

a plate chamber housing said actuating plate (24), said plate chamber (28) joined with said lock actuator port (26) to receive said compressed gas to move said actuating plate (24).

4. A method for automatically locking a bolt (18) of a weapon simulator (10) after the operation of the weapon simulator (10), said method being characterized by:

a) displacing a piston (16) connected to the bolt (18) to open a lock actuator port (14) in a piston chamber (20);

5 b) distributing a fluid through said lock actuator port (14);

c) engaging a locking apparatus with said fluid;

d) actuating said locking apparatus to engage the bolt (18); and

e) obstructing movement of the bolt (18) with said locking apparatus.

5. The method as described in claim 4, wherein step d) is further characterized
10 by the steps of:

distributing said fluid into an plate chamber (28);

displacing an actuating plate (24) positioned in said plate chamber (28);

moving an actuating arm (25) attached to said actuating plate (24);

15 pushing a locking arm (17) into connection with the bolt (18) with said actuating arm (25).

6. The method as described in claim in claim 5, wherein the step of pushing a locking arm (17) is further characterized by:

pivoting said locking arm (17) about a pivot pin.

7. A weapon simulator (10) having a housing (11) and a bolt (18) slidably
20 affixed to said housing (11), said weapon simulator (10) being characterized by:

a piston chamber (20) in said housing (11);

a piston (16) connected to said bolt (18), said piston (16) positioned in said piston chamber (20);

a lock actuator port (14) in said piston chamber (20);

25 a locking apparatus positioned within the housing (11) proximate the bolt (18);

a lock actuator port (26) between said lock actuator port (14) and said locking arm (17); and

means for supplying fluid into the piston chamber (20) to generate movement of the piston (16), said supply means distributing fluid through said lock actuator port (26) to said locking apparatus.

8. The weapon simulator (10) as described in claim 7, wherein said locking
5 apparatus is characterized by:

a locking arm (17); and

actuating means for moving said locking arm (17), said actuating means connected to said locking arm (17).

9. The bolt locking assembly (12) as described in claim 2, wherein said
10 actuating means is characterized by:

an actuating arm (25) connected to said locking arm (17);

an actuating plate (24) attached to said actuating arm (25); and

an plate chamber housing said actuating plate (24), said plate chamber (28) joined with said lock actuator port (26) to receive fluid to move said actuating plate (24).

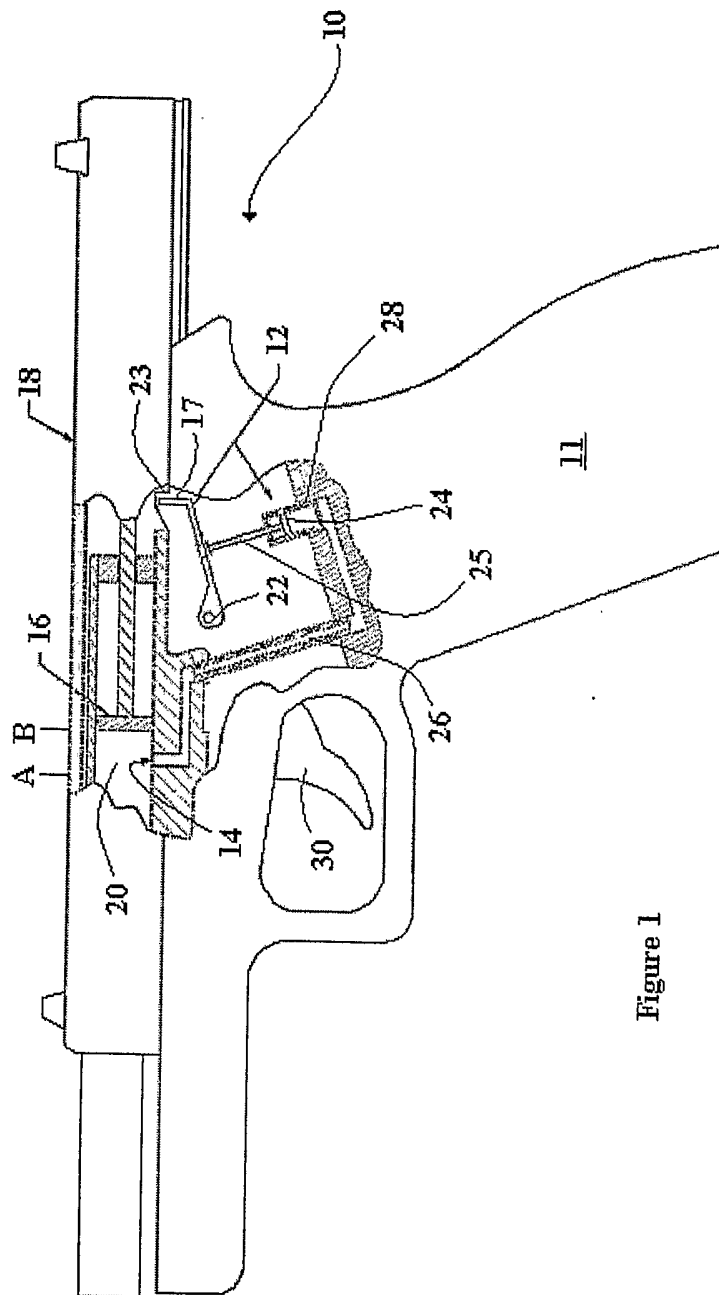


Figure 1

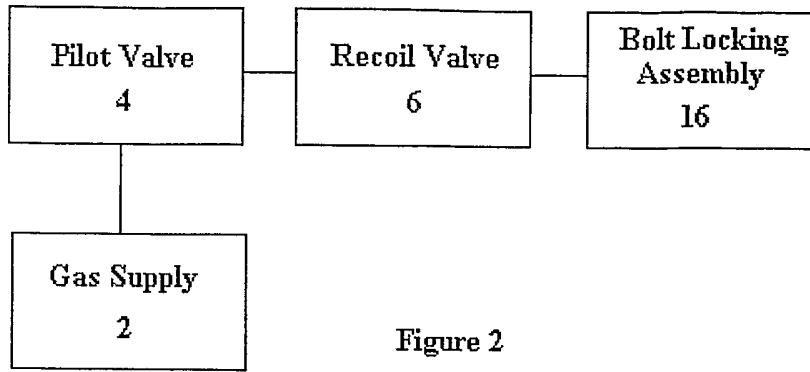


Figure 2

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/US03/25118

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : F41A 33/00
 US CL : 434/18

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 U.S. : 434/16,18,21,22; 124/32,76; 463/1,2,49; 473/569

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 4,480,999 A (WITHERELL et al) 06 November 1984 (06.11.1984), See figs. 1-5.	1-9
Y	US 4,380,437 A (YARBOROUGH, Jr.) 19 April 1983 (19.04.1983), See figs. 1-5.	1-9
A	US 4,362,145 A (STELCHER) 07 December 1982 (07.12.1982), See figs. 1-6.	1-9
A	US 5,791,328 A (ALEXANDER) 11 August 1998 (11.08.1998), See figs. 1-7.	1-9

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A"	document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"B"	earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date	"X"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"L"	document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"O"	document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"Z"	document member of the same patent family
"P"	document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search

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Date of mailing of the international search report

31 AUG 2004

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