June 25, 1963

B. M. HINES

3,094,799

IDENTIFICATION TAG

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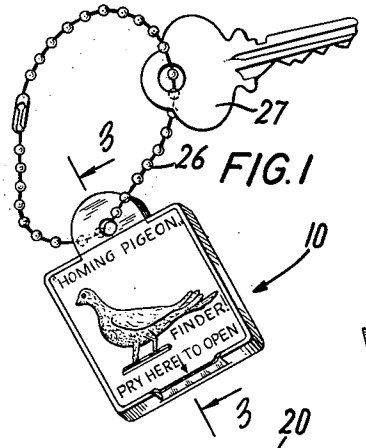
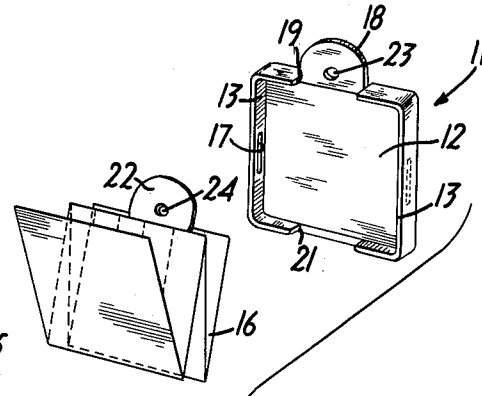


FIG. 1



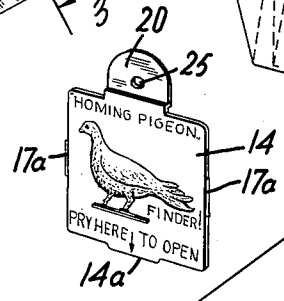


FIG. 2

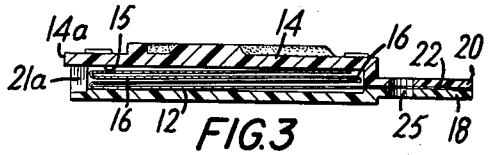


FIG. 3

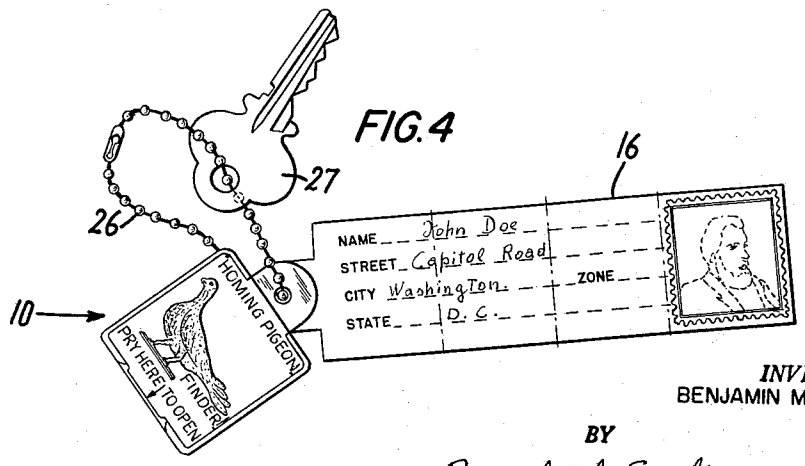


FIG. 4

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IDENTIFICATION TAG

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This invention relates to identification tags for articles such as keys.

Identification tags have been used for various articles including keys. However, if keys lost with such an identifying tag are to be returned to the owner by a finder, the finder usually must deliver the keys personally to the owner or package them for mailing if the address has not been obliterated. In view of the inconveniences involved, and the illegibility of such tags after a short period of use, it often happens that keys even if found are not returned.

Attempts have been made to provide for the return of lost keys to their owners. One such solution practiced on a wide scale involves the distribution by an organization of key tags bearing the organization's address. Each such tag also bears a code number (replicas of automobile license numbers have been used) and the organization maintains an index of all such code numbers and the owners assigned that issued tag. An arrangement with the post office whereby the postage fee is prepaid facilitates their return to the organization. There the identification of the owner is made and the keys are finally packaged and mailed to the owner.

It is apparent that the above solution to the lost key problem entailed unnecessary complexity and expense and furthermore prevented the expeditious return of lost keys to their owner.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an identification tag construction which protects mailing information and yet facilitates prompt and direct return by mail of the identified subject matter with minimum effort and expense.

It is another object of the invention to provide an identification tag of the above character which is of such size that it may be conveniently carried in a pocket or purse and yet facilitate a prompt return of the article to which it may be attached.

Yet a further object of the invention is to provide an identification tag having the above characteristics which may be readied for mailing by a finder without removing the keys or other lost article from the tag and in which the entire tag is returned for reuse.

These and other objects of the invention are accomplished by providing an identification tag of flexible plastic, or other durable though light material, comprising cooperating casing and closure members which are capable of rapid assembly and disassembly. Assembling the two members forms a chamber wherein is carried a flexible mailing tag bearing instructions to the finder, a stamp and the owner's address. A key chain or other suitable element, that may be locked, is passed through tongues extending from the two members and the mailing tag, thus securing all the parts of the tag together. The tag bears upon its outer surface instructions for unlocking the members, and the mailing tag is imprinted with a simple request to deposit the entire assembly in any mailbox for return to the owner.

In the accompanying drawings:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an identification tag in accordance with the invention as adapted for use with a key chain;

FIG. 2 is an exploded view in perspective of the tag shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a section of the tag shown in FIG. 1 and

taken along the line 3—3 looking in the direction of the arrows; and

FIG. 4 is a view in elevation of the identification tag as prepared for mailing.

Referring to an illustrative embodiment of the invention with particular reference to the drawings, an identification tag **10** includes a casing member **11** formed by a base **12** and peripheral walls **13** extending from the base. A closure member **14** fits within the walls **13** to form a chamber **15** that contains a flexible mailing tag **16**. Each of the members **11** and **14** is preferably made of a flexible plastic or other suitable material.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, indentations **17** formed in the walls **13** of the casing member **11** receive protrusions **17***a* extending from the edges of the closure member **14**. The protrusions **17***a* are adapted to fit within the indentations **17** so as to allow the members **11** and **14** to snap together in a fixed relationship with the tag **16** in the chamber **15**. A first tongue **18**, integral with the casing member **11**, extends from a gap **19** in the end wall **13**. A second tongue **20** extends from the closure member **14** so as to be in alignment with the first tongue **18** when the casing and closure members **11** and **14** are secured together.

Another gap **21** in the other end wall **13**, opposite the gap **19**, forms with an extension **14***a* of the closure member **14** a slot **21***a* into which a fingernail, coin or other thin object may be inserted to pry open the identification tag **10**.

The flexible mailing tag **15** is imprinted with instructions addressed to the finder on one side and has space on the reverse side for the owner's address and a stamp. A tab **22** provided at one end of the tag **15** extends through the gap **19** when the identification tag **10** is assembled, in substantial alignment with the first and second tongues **18** and **20**. Apertures **23**, **24** and **25** are provided, respectively, in the casing member, mailing tag tab and closure member to receive a chain **26** to secure the identification tag **10** to a key **27**.

When keys and the tag **10** are found, the finder reads instructions inscribed on the surface of the closure member **14** to pry the tag apart. A slight twist of a coin, fingernail or other element, inserted in the slot **21***a*, then separates the casing member **11** and the closure member **14**. The flexible mailing tag **15** can then be withdrawn from the chamber **15**, unfolded and the entire assembly mailed. Note that since the chain **26** need not be removed, the key **27** may be permanently secured to the tag **10** by a suitable locking link. With that arrangement there is no danger of losing one of several keys by having the finder inadvertently open the chain **26** and drop one or more keys. Furthermore, the tag **10** is returned and may be reused.

The above described embodiments of the invention are illustrative only and modifications thereof will occur to those skilled in the art. Therefore, the invention is not to be limited to the specific apparatus described herein but is to be defined by the appended claims.

I claim:

1. An identification tag comprising a casing member formed by walls extending from a base to define a chamber open at one side, gaps in the walls at opposite ends of the casing member, a first tongue integral with and extending from one end of the casing member and in alignment with the gap in the wall at that end, a closure member adapted to lock with said casing member substantially closing the chamber, a second tongue integral with and extending from one end of the closure member adapted to pass through the gap in the one end of the casing member and be in substantial alignment with the first tongue on said casing member, a flexible mailing tag within said chamber, a portion of said tag

extending from the chamber in substantial alignment with the first and second tongues on the casing and closure members, a first aperture formed in said mailing tag portion, second and third apertures formed in the first and second tongues of the casing and closure members in alignment with the first aperture in the mailing tag portion, an attaching element passing through the three apertures, and a slot formed by the closure member and the gap in the wall at the other end of the casing member to facilitate separation of the members.

2. An identification tag as described in claim 1, wherein indentations are formed in the walls and protrusions are formed on the edges of the closure member, said protrusions being adapted to fit within the indentations to lock the casing and closure members together.

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