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HANDCUFF SHIELD

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FIG. 1

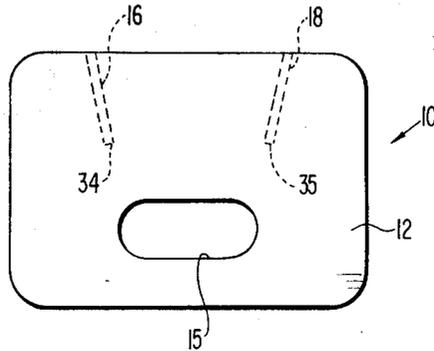


FIG. 2

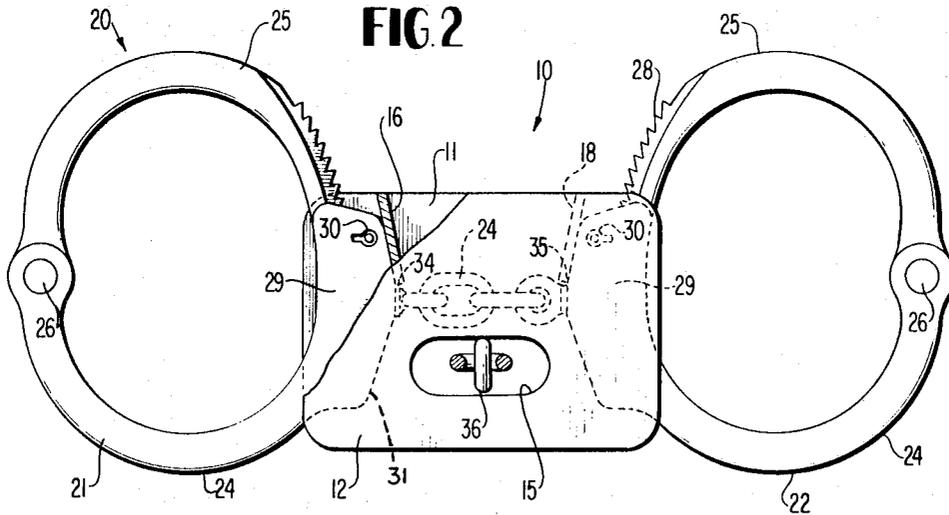
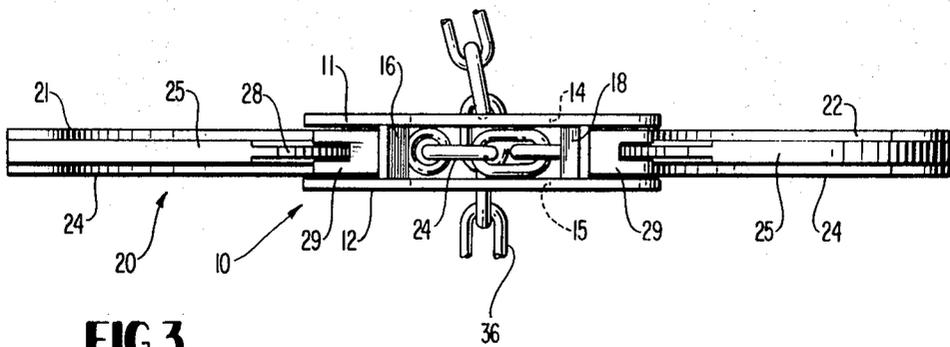


FIG. 3



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3,616,665

HANDCUFF SHIELD

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5 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A handcuff shield comprising a pair of spaced apart parallel plates rigidly connected to each other by a pair of braces extending between the plates. Aligned openings are defined in the central portion of the plates. The plates are passed downwardly about the chain which connects together a pair of handcuffs, and the braces between the plates are spaced apart and angled so as to abut the bracelets of the handcuffs and hold the chain in a substantially taut condition. The prisoner's waist chain is passed through the aligned openings of the plates below the handcuff chain to confine the handcuff chain in the shield, and the key openings to the bracelets of the handcuffs are confined within the space between the plates.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

While handcuff assemblies are usually made so that they withstand the normal attempts of prisoners to open the bracelets or break the bracelets or chain, some of the more clever and resourceful prisoners have been successful in releasing themselves from confinement by handcuffs. The standard handcuffs which are placed on the wrists of a prisoner to confine his hand and arm movements usually comprise a pair of closeable bracelets connected together by a chain. Each bracelet usually comprises a bifurcated crescent shaped base member arranged to fit partially around the wrists of the prisoner and a crescent shaped clasp rotatably held at one of its ends to the outer end of the bifurcated base member and which is movable into a closed and locked relationship with the base member about the prisoner's wrist. The keyhole and locking mechanism is usually located in the portion of the bifurcated base member which is adjacent the chain extending between the bracelets.

When a prisoner is shackled in handcuffs, his natural inclination is to remove the handcuffs, if at all possible. While the removal of handcuffs without a key to operate the lock mechanism is difficult, the prisoner usually attempts to manipulate the lock mechanism by inserting probes, etc., into the keyhole to trigger the lock mechanism. Also, the prisoner may attempt to twist the handcuffs with respect to each other to twist the chain extending between the handcuffs and break a link of the chain. Of course, a prisoner may also attempt to wrap the chain about an object and use the object as leverage to damage and break the chain.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly described, the present invention comprises a handcuff shield which covers the keyhole openings to the lock mechanism of handcuff bracelets, maintains the bracelets of handcuffs in a spaced apart relationship and in a common plane so that the bracelets cannot be twisted with respect to each other along the length of the chain, and so that the chain cannot be wrapped around an object in an attempt to damage or break the chain.

Thus, it is an object of this invention to provide a handcuff shield for deterring the breakage of and damage to handcuffs, and for preventing unauthorized opening of the handcuffs.

Another object of this invention is to provide a handcuff shield which restricts the movement of the bracelets of the handcuffs with respect to each other and which shields the key openings to the locks of the bracelets.

Another object of this invention is to provide a handcuff shield that is inexpensive to manufacture, easy to attach to the handcuffs of the prisoner, and which is convenient to carry in the pocket or on the person of a law officer.

Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon reading the following specification, when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a front view of the handcuff shield, with the internal braces of the shield shown in dashed lines.

FIG. 2 is a front view of the handcuff shield as connected to handcuffs and waist chain of a prisoner.

FIG. 3 is a top view of the handcuff shield as connected to handcuffs and a waist chain of a prisoner.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now in more detail to the drawing, in which like numerals indicate like parts of the several views, FIG. 1 shows handcuff shield 10 which generally comprises a housing composed of a pair of spaced apart plates 11 and 12 (FIG. 3) which are generally of rectangular configuration with rounded edges and which define aligned apertures 14 and 15. Plates 11 and 12 are maintained in spaced apart parallel disposition by braces or struts 16 and 18. Braces 16 and 18 can be welded or otherwise bonded to the inside faces of plates 11 and 12, and braces 16 and 18 extend from the top edges of the plates and slope inwardly toward and around the center portion of the plates, about aligned openings 14 and 15.

As is best shown in FIG. 2, handcuff shield 10 is useable with handcuff assembly 20 which comprises a pair of handcuff bracelets 21 and 22 and chain 24 which extends between the bracelets. Bracelets 21 and 22 each comprise a bifurcated crescent shaped base 24 and clasp 25 which is rotatable with respect to bifurcated base 24 about hinge pin 26. The outer periphery of clasp 25 is corrugated at 28, and bifurcated base 24 includes a latching mechanism (not shown) in its enlarged portion 29 which engages with the corrugations to prevent the clasp from being withdrawn from bifurcated base 24. Enlarged base 29 includes a keynote 30 for the insertion of a key to unlock the clasp 25 and allow withdrawal of the clasp from the bifurcated base 24. This construction is substantially standard and well known.

The enlarged base 29 of each bracelet 21 and 22 is generally curved along its outside periphery adjacent the portion thereof connected to the chain 24. The curvature of different handcuffs in this region is generally standardized and the location of keyholes 30 of most bracelets 21 and 22 usually appears in the location shown in FIG. 2.

Braces 16 and 18 are angled so they conform substantially with the angle of the outer peripheral portions 31 of enlarged base 29 of bracelets 21 and 22. Also, struts 16 and 18 are constructed so their inner ends or edges 34 and 35 will engage chain 24 when handcuff shield 10 is inserted over chain 24 in the manner as illustrated in FIG. 2. This locates keyholes 30 within the confines of plates 11 and 12, and at a substantial distance away from the side and top edges of the plates.

When handcuff shield 10 is inserted over chain 24 and enlarged base portion 29 of bracelets 21 and 22 in the manner as shown in FIG. 2, waist chain 36 of the prisoner is passed through aligned openings 14 and 15 of plates 11 and 12. Waist chain 36 will prevent the removal of handcuff shield 10 from about chain 24 and the enlarged

base portions 29 of bracelets 21 and 22. Waist chain 36 is customarily extended around the waist of the prisoner and locked behind the prisoner with a padlock or similar locking device. Aligned openings 14 and 15 are of sufficient diameter to accommodate most sizes of waist chains 36 which are commonly used. Aligned openings 14 and 15 are spaced from the bottom edges of plates 11 and 12 a distance sufficient to cause waist chain 36 to confine chain 24 extending between bracelets 21 and 22 up in the center portion of the confines of plates 11 and 12. This causes enlarged base portions 29 of bracelets 21 and 22 to be substantially located within the confines between plates 11 and 12.

While waist chain 36 has been disclosed as being the element which is utilized to hold handcuff shield 10 in place about chain 24 and bracelets 21 and 22, other locking devices can be utilized. For instance, a common padlock can be inserted through aligned openings 14 and 15, if desired.

In the event the law enforcement official places handcuff shield 10 about chain 24 so that keyholes 30 are located adjacent the lower edges of plates 11 and 12 instead of adjacent the upper edges of the plates as shown, the plates are large enough to cover substantially all of enlarged base portions 29 of bracelets 21 and 22 even when the bracelets and chain 24 are manipulated by the prisoner in an extreme position about waist chain 36. Thus, there is virtually no position of bracelets 21 and 22 and their connecting chain 24 with respect to handcuff shield 10 at which keyholes 30 can be exposed without requiring the removal of waist chain 36 or its equivalent locking device.

Braces 16 and 18 are formed to rigidly hold the plates 11 and 12 a distance apart so that bracelets 21 and 22 cannot be twisted with respect to each other along the length of chain 24. Furthermore, the spacing of plates 11 and 12 is such that little, if any, offset of bracelets 21 and 22 can be attained, so that bracelets 21 and 22 virtually always occupy a common plane. Thus, the use of handcuff shield 10 not only prevents the prisoner from gaining access to keyholes 30, but causes the prisoner to lose a substantial amount of maneuverability of his arms, and bracelets 21 and 22 and chain 24 are protected to a substantial extent against breakage or damage.

While this invention has been described in detail with particular reference to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood that variations and modifications can be effected within the spirit and scope of the invention as described hereinbefore and as defined in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A handcuff shield comprising a pair of similarly shaped parallel overlying spaced apart plate members generally of rectangular configuration, a pair of struts extending between and connected to said plate members, said struts being spaced from the center portions of said plate members and extending from adjacent edges of said plate members at converging angles about the center portions of said plate members, and aligned openings defined in said plate members generally at the center portions of said plate members.

2. In combination, a pair of handcuff bracelets each having a locking mechanism and a keyhole, a chain member connected to each of said bracelets, and means for covering the keyholes of said bracelets and for maintaining said bracelets in a spaced apart relationship.

3. The invention of claim 2 wherein said means for covering the keyholes of said bracelets and for maintaining the bracelets in spaced apart relationship includes a housing member insertible over said chain member, spaced apart brace members within said housing member normally positioned adjacent the ends and on one side of said chain member and in juxtaposition with said bracelets, and means normally positioned on the other side of said chain member for confining said chain member within said housing member.

4. The invention of claim 2 wherein said means for covering the keyholes of said bracelets and for maintaining the bracelets in spaced apart relationship comprises means for maintaining said bracelets generally parallel to each other and in substantially a common plane.

5. The invention of claim 2 and wherein said means for covering the keyholes of said bracelets and for maintaining the bracelets in spaced apart relationship comprises means for preventing said bracelets from being twisted along the length of said chain with respect to each other.

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