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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A decorative cap and wheel nut or bolt insert assembly, and a method of assembling them. The insert is coated and/or plated and includes a hex-haped section and a section having a circular cylindrical outer surface. A cap includes a hex cross-section segment and a circular cylindrical cross-section segment. The hex cross-section segment of the cap slips easily over the hex section of the insert while the circular cylindrical cross-section segment has a smaller ID than the OD of the circular cylindrical insert section. The cap is formed of sheet material which is both plastically and elastically deformable. When pressed onto the insert, the cap deforms both plastically and elastically. An interference fit is formed between them by radial plastic deformation of the cap.

(22) Filed: **Jan. 18, 2005**

### Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 10/303,564, filed on Nov. 25, 2002, now Pat. No. 6,866,457, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 09/828,662, filed on Apr. 5, 2001.

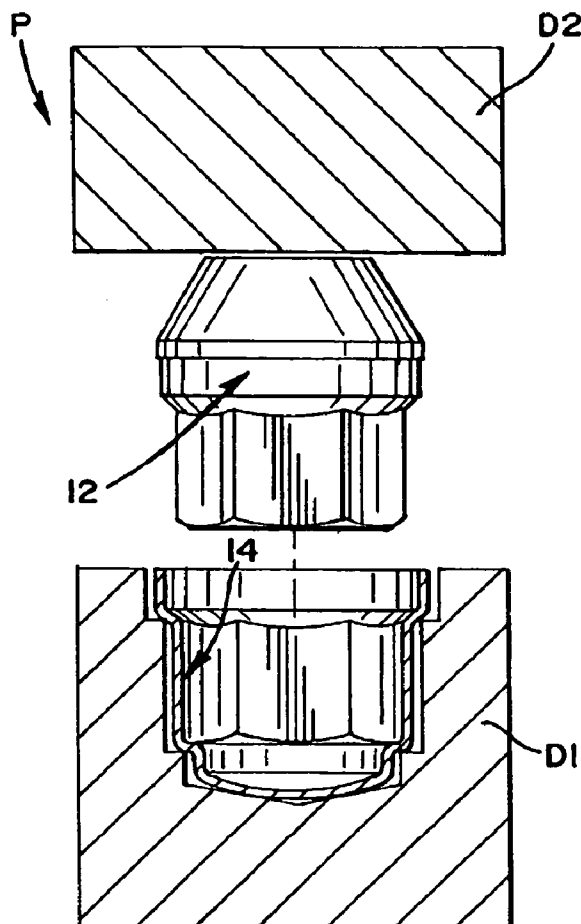


FIG. 1

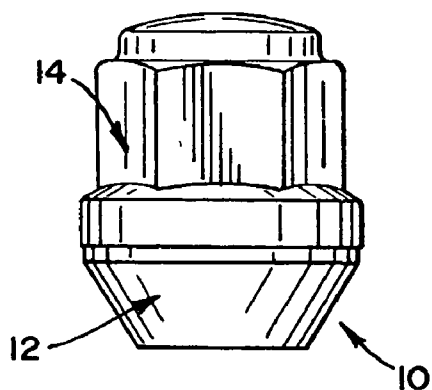


FIG. 2

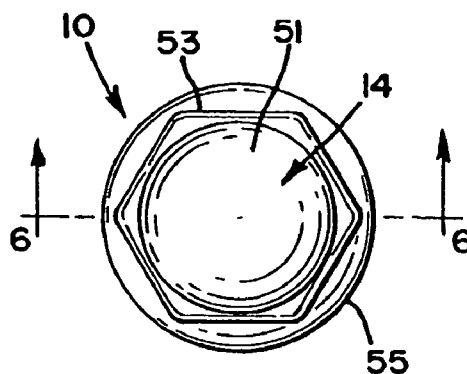


FIG. 3

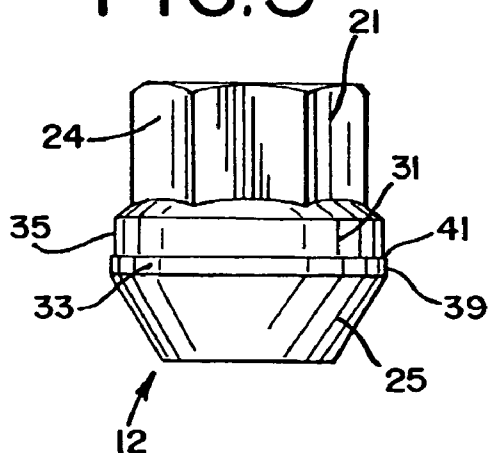


FIG. 4

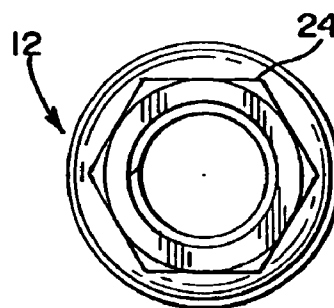


FIG. 5

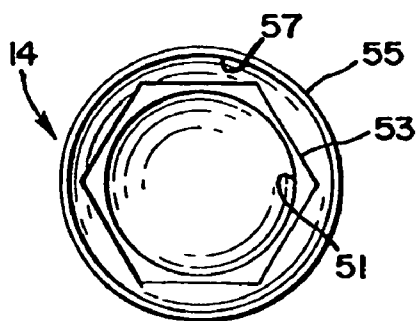


FIG. 6

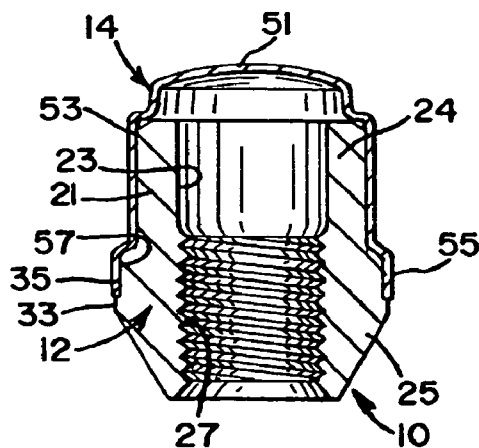


FIG.7

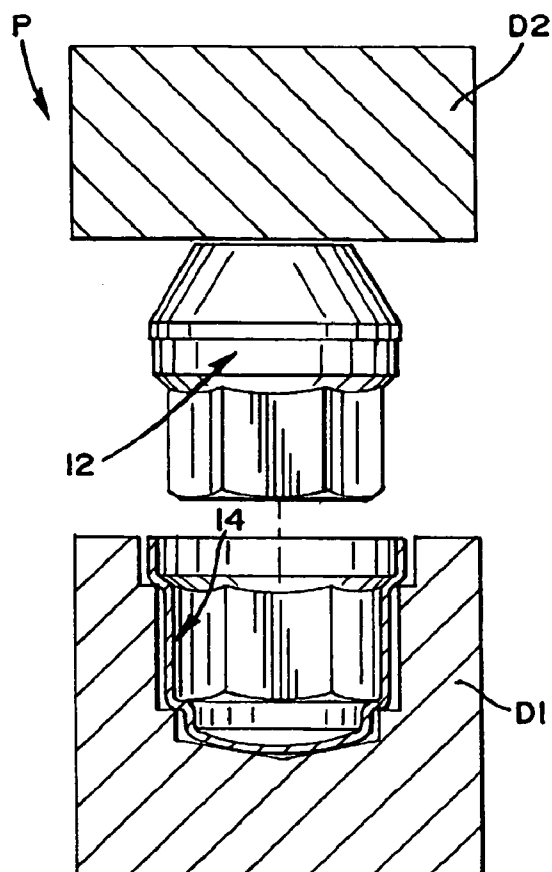


FIG.8

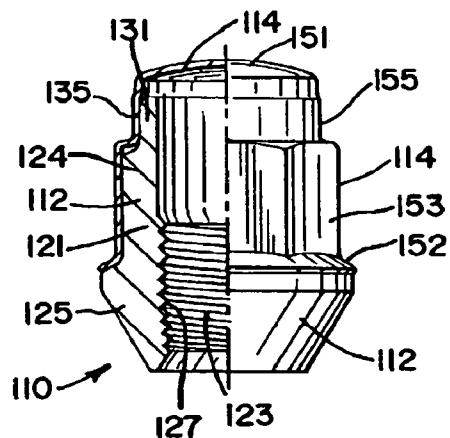


FIG.9

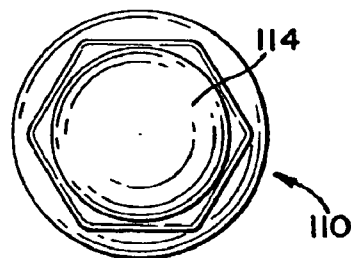


FIG.10

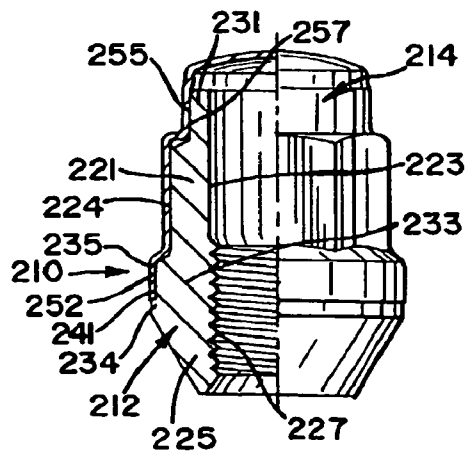


FIG.11

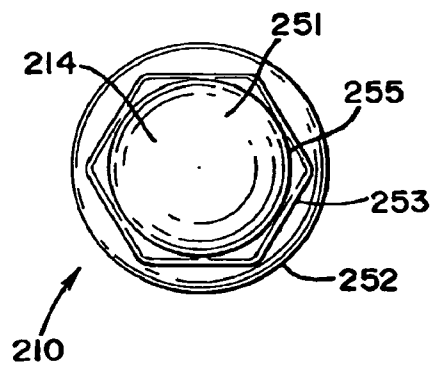


FIG. 12

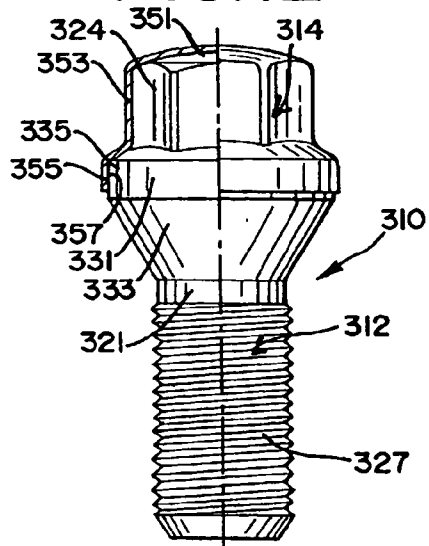


FIG. 14

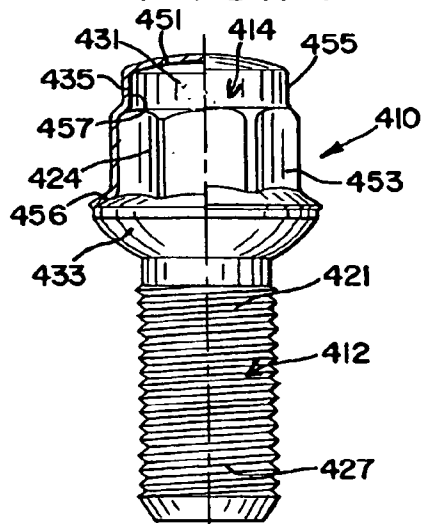


FIG. 13

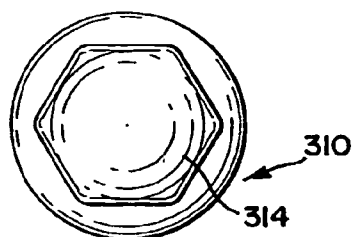


FIG. 15

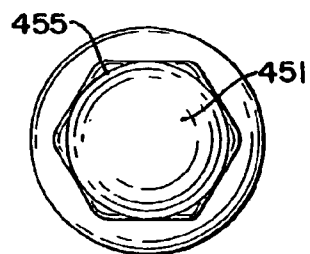


FIG. 16

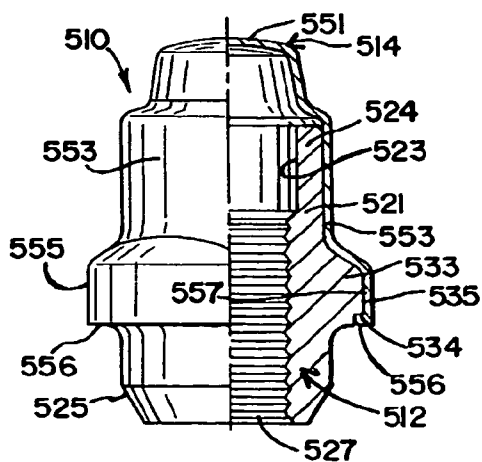


FIG. 17

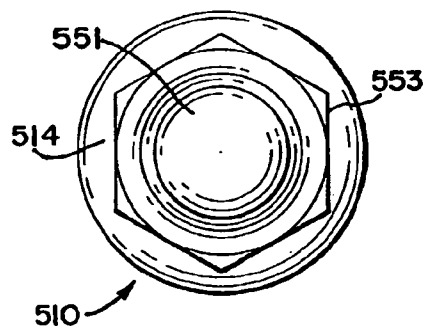


FIG.18

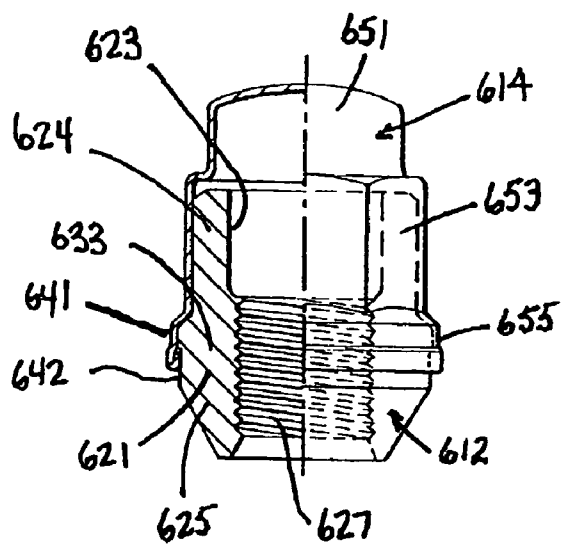


FIG.19

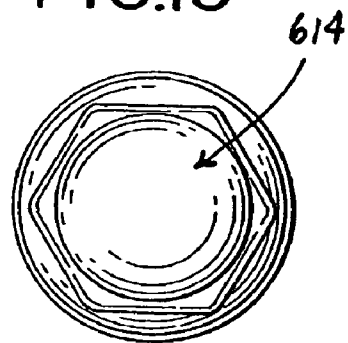


FIG.20

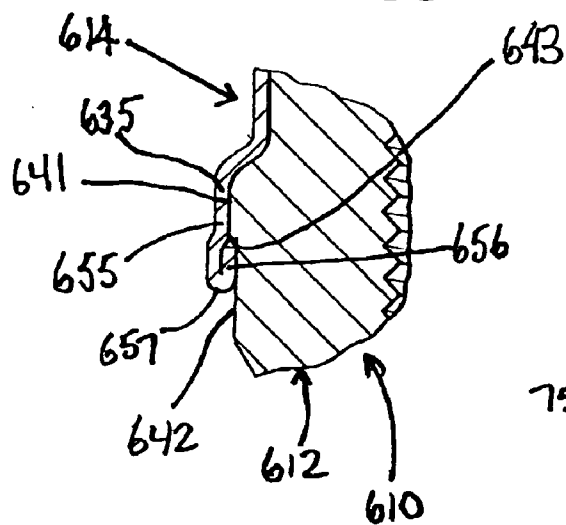
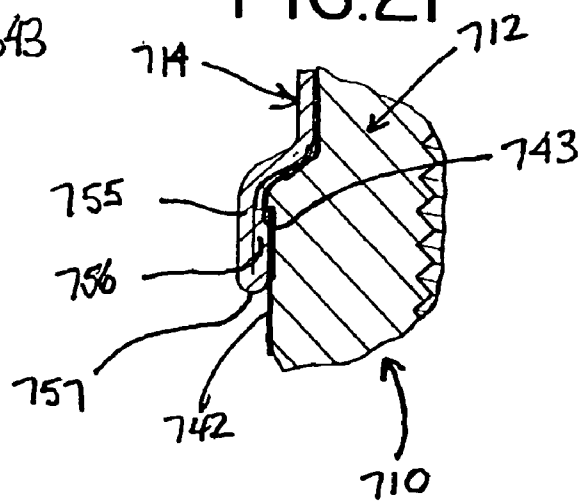


FIG.21



## DECORATIVE CAPPED WHEEL NUT OR BOLT ASSEMBLY AND METHOD

### RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation of application Ser. No. 10/303,564, filed Nov. 25, 2002, which is a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 09/828,662, filed Apr. 5, 2001, now abandoned. The disclosure of application Ser. No. 10/303,564 is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates generally to wheel nuts or bolts for securing a vehicle wheel, i.e., a tire and rim, on a motor vehicle. It relates particularly to a decorative capped wheel nut or bolt assembly and assembly method.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Decorative capped wheel nuts and bolts are well-known in the automotive art. A decorative capped wheel nut assembly, for example, conventionally comprises a nut insert and a decorative cap which is fastened to the insert by welding, crimping or with an adhesive. Examples of these constructions are illustrated in various prior art patents, including the Toth U.S. Pat. No. 4,955,773, the Bydalek U.S. Pat. No. 5,772,377, the Chaivre U.S. Pat. No. 4,018,133, and U.S. Pat. No. 4,056,862, the Baltzell U.S. Pat. No. 4,764,070 and the Somers et al. U.S. Pat. No. 6,036,420, for example. It is also known to form threads in a cap and in a lug nut and thread the cap onto the nut. See the Nolan et al. U.S. Pat. No. 5,180,266 in this regard.

[0004] All nut or bolt and cap assemblies described in the prior art require relatively complex fastening structures, assembly procedures and/or additional components. Assemblies made by welding require expensive and sophisticated equipment for implementation of production. Practical options for plating the inserts are limited where welding is employed, placing welded designs at a disadvantage for achieving high corrosion resistance. Crimped fastening designs require the addition of components, i.e., a sealant or O-ring, which complicates automated assembly. The use of adhesives for fastening causes similar problems. Because of the nature of welding, or the use of additional components, production rates for these assemblies processes are low.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] An object of the invention is to provide an improved decorative capped wheel nut or wheel bolt assembly.

[0006] Another object is to provide a decorative capped wheel nut or wheel bolt assembly wherein the decorative cap is secured to the nut or bolt insert without welding, applying an adhesive, or using a sealant or O-ring.

[0007] Yet another object is to provide a decorative cap and insert assembly which is simpler and less expensive, but just as reliable, as prior art assemblies.

[0008] Still another object is to provide a new and improved method of assembling a decorative cap and nut or bolt insert.

[0009] The foregoing and other objects are realized in an insert and cap assembly wherein the components are securely fastened together by creating an interference fit between the cap and the insert. Specifically, the insert includes at least one section with a plated, coated or plated and coated circular cylindrical outer surface. The cap has a corresponding segment with a circular cylindrical inner surface which has an inside diameter 0.010 to 0.030 inches smaller than the outside diameter of the coated circular cylindrical outer surface. The cap is fabricated of material which makes it radially deformable both plastically and elastically. The insert is press fit into the cap, driving the cap's cylindrical inner surface over the insert's coated circular cylindrical outer surface. Radial plastic and elastic deformation of the cap occurs. A 0.002 to 0.006 inches interference fit is formed around the interfering circular cylindrical surfaces by the elastic deformation of the cap.

[0010] In most applications of the invention, a straight cylindrical interference fit is sufficient to retain the cap on the nut insert permanently. In another aspect of the invention the cap rim may also be crimped, however. In yet another aspect, the cap rim may be thickened and snap behind a shoulder on the insert.

[0011] The improved method of retaining a cap on the insert body requires only two components, the cap and the insert, thus reducing the extra expense of an additional component and the complexities of introducing this extra component into the assembly process. It also allows the use of all types of coating, plating and coating or plating alone on the insert, which is not possible using current welding assembly methods. Further cost savings may be achieved with higher assembly rates using simple hydraulic, pneumatic, or mechanical press equipment.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] The invention, including its construction and method of operation, is illustrated more or less diagrammatically in the drawings, in which:

[0013] **FIG. 1** is a side elevational view of a first embodiment of the invention in a decorative capped wheel nut assembly;

[0014] **FIG. 2** is a top plan view of the wheel nut assembly seen in **FIG. 1**;

[0015] **FIG. 3** is a side elevational view of the nut insert for the decorative capped wheel nut assembly seen in **FIGS. 1 and 2**;

[0016] **FIG. 4** is a top plan view of the nut insert seen in **FIG. 3**;

[0017] **FIG. 5** is a bottom plan view of the cap for the decorative capped wheel nut assembly seen in **FIGS. 1 and 2**;

[0018] **FIG. 6** is a sectional view taken along line 6-6 of **FIG. 2**;

[0019] **FIG. 7** is a diagrammatic illustration of an insert being press fit into a cap in a mechanical press;

[0020] **FIG. 8** is a side view, partially in elevation and partially in section, of a second embodiment of the capped invention;

[0021] FIG. 9 is a top plan view of the capped wheel nut assembly seen in FIG. 8;

[0022] FIG. 10 is a split elevational/sectional view, similar to FIG. 8, of a third embodiment of the capped wheel nut assembly invention;

[0023] FIG. 11 is a top plan view of the capped wheel nut assembly seen in FIG. 10;

[0024] FIG. 12 is a split elevational/sectional view, similar to FIG. 8, of a fourth embodiment of the invention, a decorative capped wheel bolt assembly;

[0025] FIG. 13 is a top plan view of the capped wheel bolt assembly seen in FIG. 12;

[0026] FIG. 14 is a split elevational/sectional view, similar to FIG. 8, of a fifth embodiment of the invention, another decorative capped wheel bolt assembly;

[0027] FIG. 15 is a top plan view of the capped wheel bolt assembly seen in FIG. 14;

[0028] FIG. 16 is a split elevational/sectional view, similar to FIG. 8, of a sixth embodiment of the invention, another capped wheel nut assembly;

[0029] FIG. 17 is a top plan view of the capped wheel nut assembly seen in FIG. 16;

[0030] FIG. 18 is a split elevational/sectional view, similar to FIG. 8, of a seventh embodiment of the invention, yet another capped wheel nut assembly;

[0031] FIG. 19 is a top plan view of the capped wheel nut assembly seen in FIG. 18;

[0032] FIG. 20 is an enlarged portion of the assembly seen in FIG. 18; and

[0033] FIG. 21 is an enlarged portion of an assembly similar to that of FIG. 20, showing a variation of the seventh embodiment assembly.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0034] Referring now to the drawings, and particularly to FIGS. 1-6, a decorative capped wheel nut assembly comprising a first embodiment of the present invention is seen generally at 10. The wheel nut assembly 10 includes a nut insert 12 and a decorative cap 14 fastened securely together by a method embodying features of the invention.

[0035] FIGS. 1, 2 and 6 illustrate the wheel nut 10 assembly, i.e., an assembled nut insert 12 and cap 14. FIGS. 3 and 4 illustrate a nut insert 12 separately. FIG. 5 illustrates a cap 14 separately (end view).

[0036] As seen in FIGS. 3, 4 and 6, the nut insert 12 comprises a body 21 having a cylindrical bore 23 extending axially through it from a hex-shaped section 24 on one end to a frusto-conical base 25 on the other. The nut insert 12 is commonly referred to as a hex-nut insert and is fabricated in a conventional manner of carbon steel. The frusto-conical base 25 is adapted to seat in a conventional manner in a wheel rim aperture (not shown) to fasten the wheel rim to a vehicle wheel stud (not shown). The bore 23 is internally threaded at its inner end 27 to receive the stud.

[0037] The nut insert 12 is coated in a conventional manner to prevent oxidation of exposed areas. In the embodiment illustrated a coating of GEOMET brand coating material available from Metal Coatings International, Inc. of Chardon, Ohio, is applied. GEOMET is a coating comprised mainly of overlapping zinc and aluminum flake in an inorganic binder, and is chromium free. It is applied over the entire insert 12 to a thickness of 0.001 inches.

[0038] Between the hex-shaped section 24 and the frusto-conical base 25, the insert body 21 has two cylindrical body sections 31 and 33. The section 31 of the illustrated insert body 21 has a cylindrical outer (coated) surface 35 with an outside diameter (OD) of 0.930 inches. The surface 35 has an axial length of 0.130 inches. The section 33 has a cylindrical outer (coated) surface 39 with an OD of 0.955 inches. The surface 33 has an axial length of 0.0625 inches. A radially extending shoulder 41 is formed between the two cylindrical surfaces 31 and 33.

[0039] As seen in FIGS. 2, 5 and 6, the cap 14 comprises three axially aligned wall segments; a dome-shaped end wall segment 51, a hex cross-section side wall segment 53 and a circular cylindrical side wall segment 55. The configuration and internal cross-sectional dimensions of the hex-shaped side wall segment 53 are such that it slips easily over the coated, hex-shaped section 24 of the insert body. According to the invention, however, as will hereinafter be further discussed, the internal cross-sectional dimension of the circular cylindrical side wall segment 55 is such that a predetermined elastic interference fit is formed between the inner surface 57 of the wall segment 55 and the coated cylindrical outer surface 35 of the insert body 21 when the cap 14 is press fit onto the insert 12.

[0040] The cap 14 is fabricated of stainless steel sheet with a nominal thickness of 0.018 to 0.020 inches. The inside diameter (ID) of the cylindrical wall segment 55 is preferably 0.910 inches. When the cap 14 is pressed onto the insert 12, the cylindrical wall segment 55 undergoes both plastic and elastic deformation. The portion of deformation that is plastic serves to allow a reasonable manufacturing tolerance for both components. The elastic deformation results in tensile hoop stresses in the cap 14 and constitutes the mechanism by which the cap 14 is retained on the insert 12. The resulting interference fit is approximately 0.0025 inches around the interfering circular cylindrical surfaces as a result of elastic deformation, but can vary with changes in cap wall thickness or mechanical properties of the cap material.

[0041] FIG. 7 illustrates the assembly of a nut insert 12 into a cap 14 in a simple mechanical press P. The press P comprises a fixed die D1 in which the cap 14 is seated. A movable die D2 receives the insert 12 and drives it downwardly onto the cap 14 under the influence of pressure exerted in a conventional manner by the mechanical press P. The fixed die D1 receives the cap 14 in a well W. The well W is dimensioned to permit the radial expansion of the cylindrical side wall segment 55 which takes place in the cap 14 as the insert 12 is press fit into the cap 14.

[0042] Referring now to FIGS. 8 and 9, a decorative capped wheel nut assembly comprising a second embodiment of the invention is seen generally at 110. The assembly 110 includes a nut insert 112 and a decorative cap 114 fastened together according to the present invention.

[0043] The nut insert 112 comprises a body 121 having a cylindrical bore 123 extending axially through it from a

cylindrical section **131** on one end to a frusto-conical base **125** on the other. The base **125** is adapted to seat in a wheel rim aperture (not shown). The bore **123** is internally threaded at **127**. The insert **112** is coated in a manner previously discussed.

[0044] Between the conical base **125** and the cylindrical section **131**, there is a hex-shaped section **124**. The hex-shaped section **124** corresponds to the hex section **24** in the insert body **21** of the assembly **10**.

[0045] The axially outer, or end cylindrical section **131**, has a coated cylindrical outer surface **135** with an OD of 0.660 inches. The surface **135** has an axial length of 0.190 inches.

[0046] As seen in **FIG. 8** the cap **114**, which is again formed from stainless steel sheet, comprises four axially aligned segments; a dome shaped end wall segment **151**, a cylindrical side wall segment **155**, a hex-shaped side wall segment **153** and a frusto-conical lip **152**. The configuration and internal cross-sectional dimensions of the hex-shaped side wall segment **153** are such that it slips easily over the coated hex-shaped section **124** in the insert body **121**.

[0047] The ID of the cylindrical wall segment **155** is 0.640 inches. When the cap **114** is pressed onto the insert **112**, the cylindrical wall segment **155** undergoes both plastic and elastic deformation in the manner hereinbefore discussed with relation to the cap **14**. The elastic deformation constitutes the mechanism by which the cap **114** is retained on the insert **112**. The resulting interference fit is approximately 0.0025, again varying with changes in cap wall thickness or mechanical properties of the cap material.

[0048] Referring now to **FIGS. 10 and 11**, a decorative capped wheel nut assembly comprising a third embodiment of the invention is seen generally at **210**. The assembly **210** includes a nut insert **212** and a decorative cap **214** fastened together according to the invention.

[0049] The nut insert **212** comprises a body **221** having a cylindrical bore **223** extending axially through it from a cylindrical section **231** on one end to a frusto-conical base **225** on the other. The base **225** is adapted to seat in a wheel rim aperture (not shown). The bore **223** is internally threaded at **227**. Like the inserts **12** and **112**, the insert **212** is coated.

[0050] Between the conical base **225** and the end cylindrical section **231** there is a hex-shaped section **224**. The hex-shaped section **224** corresponds to the section **24** in the insert body **21** of the insert **12**.

[0051] Between the hex-shaped section **224** and the frusto-conical base **225**, the insert body **221** has two cylindrical body sections **233** and **234**. The axially outer cylindrical section **233** of the two has a coated cylindrical outer surface **235** with an outside diameter (OD) of 0.930 inches. The surface **235** has an axial length of 0.130 inches. A radially extending shoulder **241** is formed between the two cylindrical surfaces **233** and **234**.

[0052] The end cylindrical section **231** has a coated cylindrical outer surface **236** with an OD of 0.660 inches. The surface **236** has an axial length of 0.190 inches.

[0053] As seen in **FIG. 11**, the cap **214**, again formed of stainless steel sheet, comprises four axially aligned seg-

ments; a dome shaped end wall segment **251**, an end circular cylindrical side wall segment **255**, a hex-shaped side wall segment **253** and a circular cylindrical side wall segment **252**. The configuration and internal cross-sectional dimensions of the hex-shaped side wall segment **253** are such that it will slip freely over the coated hex-shaped section **224** in the insert body **221**.

[0054] The ID of the cylindrical wall segment **255** is 0.640 inches. When the cap **214** is pressed onto the insert **212**, the cylindrical wall segment **255** undergoes the aforedescribed plastic and elastic deformation as it is forced over the coated cylindrical surface **236**. The resulting interference fit is again approximately 0.0025.

[0055] The ID of the cylindrical side-wall segment **252** is 0.910 inches. As such, an interference fit of 0.0025 inches is effected at the same time between the side-wall segment **252** and the coated outer surface **235** of the end cylindrical section **231**.

[0056] In **FIGS. 12-15** the invention is seen in the context of a wheel bolt rather than a wheel nut. Referring specifically to **FIGS. 12 and 13**, a decorative capped wheel bolt assembly comprising a fourth embodiment of the invention is seen generally at **310**. The assembly **310** includes a bolt insert **312** and a decorative cap **314**.

[0057] The bolt insert **312** comprises a bolt body **321** fabricated of carbon steel in a conventional manner. The body **321** includes a hex-shaped section **324** at one end and an externally threaded base **327** at the opposite end. The insert **312** is coated in a manner previously discussed.

[0058] Between the hex-section **324** and the threaded base **327**, a circular cylindrical section **331** and a frusto-conical section **333** are formed. The circular cylindrical section **331** has a coated cylindrical outer surface **335**. The OD of surface **335** is 0.895 inches. The surface **335** has an axial length of 0.165 inches.

[0059] The frusto-conical section **333** is adapted to seat in a wheel rim aperture (not shown) to fasten the wheel rim to a vehicle wheel. The threaded base **327** of the insert **312** threads into the wheel hub in a well known manner.

[0060] The cap **314**, again formed from stainless steel sheet, comprises three axially aligned segments, a dome shaped end wall segment **351**, a hexshaped side wall segment **353** and a cylindrical side wall segment **355**. The configuration and internal cross-sectional dimensions of the hex-shaped side wall segment **353** are such that it slips easily over the coated hex-shaped section **324** in the insert body **321**.

[0061] The ID of the cylindrical wall segment **355** is 0.875 inches. When the cap **314** is pressed onto the insert **312**, the cylindrical wall segment **355** undergoes the aforedescribed plastic and elastic deformation as it is forced over the coated surface **335** on the bolt body **321**. The resulting interference fit is again approximately 0.0025 inches.

[0062] Referring now to **FIGS. 14 and 15**, a decorative capped wheel bolt assembly comprising a fifth embodiment of the invention is seen generally at **410**. The assembly **410** also includes a bolt insert **412** and a decorative cap **414**.

[0063] The bolt insert **412** comprises a bolt body **421** fabricated of carbon steel in a conventional manner. The



body **421** includes a hex-shaped section **424** near one end and an externally threaded base **427** at the opposite end. The insert **412** is coated in a manner previously discussed.

[0064] Axially outwardly of the hex-section **424**, the insert **412** includes a circular cylindrical section **431**. The circular cylindrical section **431** has a coated cylindrical outer surface **435**. The OD of surface **435** is 0.615 inches. The surface **435** has an axial length of 0.150 inches.

[0065] The insert **412** also has a spherical section **433** adapted to seat in a conventional manner in a wheel rim aperture (not shown) to fasten the wheel rim to a vehicle wheel. The threaded base **427** of the insert **412** threads into the wheel in a well known manner.

[0066] The cap **414**, again formed from stainless steel sheet, comprises three axially aligned segments; a dome shaped end wall segment **451**, a cylindrical side wall segment **455**, a hex-shaped side wall segment **453** and a flared lip **456**. The configuration and internal cross-sectional dimensions of the hex-shaped side wall segment **453** are such that it slips easily over the coated hex-shaped section **424** in the insert body **421**.

[0067] The ID of the cylindrical wall segment **455** is 0.595 inches. When the insert **412** is pressed into the cap **414**, the cylindrical wall segment **455** undergoes the aforescribed plastic and elastic deformation. As it is forced over the coated cylindrical surface **435** on the bolt body **421**, an interference fit of approximately 0.0025 inches is effected around the coated surface **435**.

[0068] FIGS. 16 and 17 illustrate yet a sixth embodiment of a capped wheel nut assembly embodying features of the invention at **510**. The assembly **510** includes a nut insert **512** and a decorative cap **514**.

[0069] The nut insert **512** comprises a body **521** having a cylindrical bore **523** extending axially through it from a hex-shaped section **524** on one end to a frusto-conical base **525** on the other. The base **525** is adapted to seat in a wheel rim aperture (not shown). The bore **523** is internally threaded at **527**. Like the inserts **12** and **112**, the insert **512** is coated.

[0070] Between the hex-shaped head **524** and the frusto-conical base **525**, the insert body **521** has a body section **533**. The body section **533** of the illustrated insert body **521** has a coated cylindrical outer surface **535** with an OD of 1.160 inches and an axial length of 0.130 inches. Below the cylindrical body section surface **535**, and above the frusto-conical base **525**, there is an undercut **534**.

[0071] The cap **514** comprises three axially aligned wall segments; a dome-shaped end wall segment **551**, a hex cross-section side wall segment **553**, a circular cylindrical side wall segment **555** and a crimp section **556**. The configuration and internal cross-sectional dimensions of the hex-shaped side wall segment **553** are such that it slips easily over the coated, hex-shaped section **524** of the insert body (before the inward crimp section **556** is formed). The internal cross-sectional dimension of the circular cylindrical side wall segment **555** is such that a predetermined interference fit is formed between the inner surface **557** of the wall segment **555** and the coated cylindrical outer surface **535** of the insert body **521** when the cap **514** is press fit onto the insert **512**.

[0072] The cap **514** is fabricated of stainless steel sheet with a nominal thickness of 0.018 to 0.020 inches. The inside diameter (ID) of the cylindrical wall segment **555** is preferably 1.140 inches. The cap **514** is pressed onto the insert **512** and the cylindrical wall segment **555** undergoes plastic and elastic deformation. The resulting interference fit is approximately 0.0025.

[0073] In this embodiment of the invention, the crimp section **556** is formed inwardly after the insert **512** is press fit into the cap **514** in the aforescribed manner. Crimping may be accomplished as a continuation of the press-fit operation. The crimp section **556** is crimped into engagement with the undercut **534** on the insert body **521**. The crimp feature is offered as an option where the assembly **510** may be subject to extreme wrenching abuse, and assures that it will remain intact under such conditions. It also provides a pleasing decorative appearance to the assembly. The interference fit and the crimp then both serve to hold the cap **514** securely on the insert **512** with the interference fit serving the further function of blocking the entry of moisture at the juncture of surfaces **535** and **557**.

[0074] FIGS. 18-20 illustrate a seventh embodiment of a capped wheel nut assembly embodying features of the invention at **610**. The assembly **610** includes a nut insert **612** and a decorative cap **614**.

[0075] The nut insert **612** comprises a body **621** having a cylindrical bore **623** extending axially through it from a hex-shaped section **624** on one end to a frusto-conical base **625** on the other. The base **625** is adapted to seat in a wheel rim aperture (not shown). The bore **623** is internally threaded at **627**. Like the inserts **12** and **112**, the insert **612** is coated.

[0076] Between the hex-shaped head **624** and the frusto-conical base **625**, the insert body **621** has a body section **633**. As best seen in FIG. 20, the body section **633** of the illustrated insert body **621** has a coated cylindrical surface **635** adjacent the base **625** which has an axial length of 0.180 inches. The coated cylindrical surface **635** includes a first cylindrical surface **641** having an OD of 0.910 inches and an axial length of 0.070 inches and a second cylindrical surface **642** having an OD of 0.890 inches and an axial length of 0.110 inches. An annular shoulder **643** having a width of 0.010 inches is, thus, formed between the first and second surfaces **641** and **642**.

[0077] The cap **614** comprises three axially aligned wall segments; a dome-shaped end wall segment **651**, a hex cross-section side wall segment **653** and a generally circular cylindrical side wall segment **655**. The configuration and internal cross-sectional dimensions of the hex-shaped side wall segment **653** are such that it slips easily over the coated, hex-shaped section **624** of the insert body.

[0078] The circular cylindrical side wall segment **655** includes a lip **656** folded back inside the wall segment. As seen in FIG. 20, the lip **656** doubles the wall segment **655** thickness at its outer end, as seen at **657**. Coextensive with the lip **656**, the wall segment **655** is also formed slightly outwardly so that the double thickness portion **657** of it is effectively centered under the segment **655**.

[0079] The cap **614** is fabricated of stainless steel sheet with a nominal thickness of 0.018 to 0.020 inches. The inside diameter (ID) of the cylindrical wall segment **655** not

covered by the lip **656** is preferably 0.890 inches. The cap **614** is pressed onto the insert **612** and the cylindrical wall segment **655** undergoes plastic and elastic deformation. The resulting interference fit between the first cylindrical surface **641** and wall segment **655** is approximately 0.0025 inches.

[0080] In effect, both the wall segment **655** not covered by the lip **656** and the double thickness portion **657** of the wall segment **655**, **656** including the lip, stretch radially outwardly as the cap **614** is pressed on to the insert **612**. When the lip **656** passes the shoulder **643**, it snaps radially inwardly due to the elastic component of the deformation, effectively locking the cap on the nut insert.

[0081] Referring now to **FIG. 21**, a variation of the seventh embodiment capped wheel nut assembly **610** is seen at **710**. The assembly **710** is very similar in construction and operation to the assembly **610**, so only differences are described. Reference numerals which correspond to those of the assembly plus **100** digits are employed.

[0082] In the assembly **710**, the circular cylindrical wall segment **755** of the cap **714** has an axially longer cylindrical lip **756**, and the shoulder **743** is located accordingly. No offset is formed in the wall segment **755** so the double thickness portion **757** is not centered under the remainder of the wall segment **755**.

[0083] The cylindrical surface **742** adjacent the shoulder **743** has an outside diameter of 0.890 inches. The inside diameter of the cylindrical lip **756** is 0.870 inches. When the cap **714** is press fit onto the insert **714**, the wall segment **755** and lip **756** undergo plastic and elastic deformation. An interference fit between the lip **756** and the surface **742** is approximately 0.0025 inches.

[0084] It should be pointed out at this point that the various inserts described might be plated first and then coated. They might also be plated in a conventional manner and not coated. The invention contemplates employing any of these approaches to protect a carbon steel insert from the elements. It should also be understood that although only the third embodiment assembly **210** (**FIGS. 10 and 11**) illustrates using separate interference fits at two axially spaced, mating cylindrical surfaces, the invention contemplates the use of either one or two sets of mating cylindrical surfaces in any embodiment, as a matter of choice.

[0085] While preferred embodiments of the invention have been described, it should also be understood that the invention is not so limited and modifications may be made without departing from the invention. The scope of the invention is defined by the appended claims, and all devices that come within the meaning of the claims, either literally or by equivalence, are intended to be embraced therein.

1. A decorative cap and wheel fastener assembly for a vehicle wheel, comprising:

- a) a fastener insert body having threads formed thereon encircling the axis of said body;
- b) said body including one section having an external surface with a polygonal cross-section encircling said axis;
- c) said body including another section having an external surface with a circular cylindrical cross-section encircling said axis; and

d) a cap including one wall segment having an internal surface with a polygonal cross-section;

e) said cap further including another wall segment having an internal surface with a circular cylindrical cross-section, said wall segment being formed of sheet material which is radially deformable both plastically and elastically;

f) said insert body and said cap being assembled by being press fit together, said circular cylindrical cross-section surface on said body being greater than the unassembled internal dimensions of said circular cylindrical cross-section surface in said other wall segment of said cap whereby said other wall segment is plastically and elastically deformed radially outwardly to form an interference fit between said other wall segment and said other body section when said insert body and said cap are assembled, said elastic deformation being at least 0.002 inches radially outwardly around the entire circumference of said cap.

2. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 1 further characterized in that:

a) said external surfaces of said insert body are coated;

b) said coating is approximately 0.001 inches thick.

3. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 1 further characterized in that the diameter of said internal cylindrical surface in said cap is 0.010 to 0.030 less than the diameter of said external cylindrical surface on said insert prior to assembly of said cap and wheel fastener whereby said cap is deformed plastically and elastically at least 0.0025 inches radially.

4. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 2 further characterized in that:

a) said coating is chromium free.

5. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 1 further characterized in that:

a) said elastic deformation is between 0.002 and 0.006 inches around the said external and internal circular cylindrical surfaces.

6. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 1 further characterized in that:

a) said internal polygonal surface is seated over said external polygonal surface on said insert in a non-interference fit relationship.

7. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 1 further characterized in that:

a) said insert body includes another section having an external surface with a circular cylindrical cross-section, said other body section being separate from said one body section; and

b) said cap includes another wall segment having an internal surface with a circular cylindrical cross-section;

c) an interference fit also being established between said other external and internal circular cylindrical surfaces.

8. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 1 further characterized in that:

- a) said cap including a crimp segment; and
  - b) said insert body including an undercut which is engaged by said crimp segment.
9. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 1 further characterized in that:
- a) said one circular cylindrical surface on said insert body has an outside diameter of about 0.930 inches.
10. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 1 further characterized in that:
- a) a shoulder is formed in said circular cylindrical surface on said insert; and
  - b) said cap having an annular free edge which seats under said shoulder.
11. A method of assembling a decorative cap and wheel nut or bolt insert comprising the steps of:
- a) forming an insert with a section having a polygonal external cross-section axially displaced from a section having circular cylindrical external cross-section;
  - b) applying a plating and/or a coating to the insert so at least the exterior of said section having an external circular cylindrical section is plated and/or coated;
  - c) forming a decorative cap of sheet material with a segment leaving a polygonal cross-section and a segment having a circular cylindrical cross-section axially displaced from each other, the polygonal cross-section segment having internal dimensions greater than the corresponding external dimensions of said polygonal section on said insert and the circular cylindrical cross-section segment having internal dimensions less than the corresponding external dimensions of said circular cylindrical section on said insert; and
  - d) press fitting said insert into said cap so as to form an interference fit between the plated and/or coated circular cylindrical surfaces of said insert and the circular cylindrical surface of said cap.
12. The method of claim 11 further characterized in that:
- a) said insert is coated with a chromium free coating material.
13. The method of claim 11 further characterized in that:
- a) an interference fit of between 0.002 and 0.006 inches is formed between said circular cylindrical surfaces.
14. The method of claim 13 further characterized by and including the step of:
- a) crimping an edge of said cap under a mating undercut on said insert body.
15. The assembly of a decorative cap and wheel fastener insert for a vehicle wheel, comprising:
- a) a fastener insert body having threads formed thereon encircling the axis of said body;
  - b) said body including one section having an external surface with a polygonal cross-section encircling said axis;
  - c) said body further including another section having an external surface with a circular cylindrical cross-section encircling said axis;
  - d) a cap including one wall segment having an internal surface with a polygonal cross-section;
  - e) said cap further including another wall segment having an internal surface with a circular cylindrical cross-section; and
  - f) said cap being formed of plastically and elastically deformable sheet material and the cross-sectional dimensions of said internal cylindrical surface in said cap being less than the cross-sectional dimensions of said cylindrical surface on said body whereby when the wheel fastener insert and the cap are assembled said one wall segment is plastically deformed radially outwardly of said axis for a distance of at least 0.002 inches.
16. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 15 further characterized in that:
- a) said external surfaces are coated with another material to a thickness of approximately 0.001 inches.
17. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 16 further characterized in that:
- a) said coating material is chromium free.
18. A decorative cap and wheel fastener combination for a vehicle wheel, comprising:
- a) a fastener insert body having threads formed thereon encircling the axis of said body;
  - b) said body including one section having an external surface with a polygonal cross-section encircling said axis;
  - c) said body further including a section having an external surface with a circular cylindrical cross-section encircling said axis; and
  - d) a cap including a wall segment having an internal surface with a polygonal cross-section;
  - e) the cross-sectional dimensions of said internal polygonal surface in said cap being at least as large as the cross-sectional dimensions of said external polygonal surface on said body;
  - f) said cap further including one wall segment having an internal surface with a circular cylindrical cross-section;
  - g) the cross-sectional dimensions of said internal cylindrical surface in said cap being less than the cross-sectional dimensions of said cylindrical surface of said body;
  - h) said insert body adapted to be press fit into said cap whereby an interference fit will be established between said one external and internal circular cylindrical surfaces.
19. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 18 further characterized in that:
- a) said cap is formed of plastically and elastically deformable sheet material.
  - b) the diameter of said internal cylindrical surface in said cap is 0.010 to 0.030 less than the diameter of said external cylindrical surface on said insert.
20. The cap and fastener assembly of claim 18 further characterized in that:

a) said cap is formed of elastically deformable sheet material and includes a free edge on said one wall segment which is folded back inside said one wall segment; and

b) said insert includes a shoulder under which said free edge seats in locking relationship.

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