CASSETTE RECORDING KIT

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ABSTRACT

A cassette recording kit for creating audio memories of special events and occasions includes a carrying case, a pair of cassette holders which are insertable into the carrying case, a cassette recorder/player which is placeable into the carrying case with the two cassette holders, and at least one blank cassette for use in the cassette recorder player to record audio. Optionally, spare batteries and/or an AC adapter may be included as part of the kit. The cassette holders are configured to be anchored into the carrying case while being removable therefrom for long-term storage. Long-term storage is achieved by providing, as part of each holder, tabs designed for retention by a conventional three-ring binder. Each tab includes a circular aperture and the spacing between apertures corresponds to the spacing between the rings of the binder.
CASSETTE RECORDING KIT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates in general to cassette recording devices, packages, equipment, kits, and related accessories. More specifically, the present invention relates to a pre-packaged cassette recording kit with all of the needed items in order to record audio on the blank cassette. While it is known that a cassette recorder/player may be pre-packaged with one or more blank audiocassettes, the present invention goes well beyond this by creating cassette holders in the form of inserts to a carrying case, which holders can be retained, long-term, in a conventional three-ring binder in order to have a lasting memory of a special event or occasion. With the very basic pre-packaged kit of only a recorder/player and one or more blank audiocassettes, no provision is made for the safe storage of the component parts of the package, nor are any provisions made for the ease of transporting the various components once the package is torn open.

[0002] While the use of audiocassette recorders/players to record and play back audio on cassettes (either regular cassettes or microcassettes) is well known, very little attention has been paid to any type of storage or preservation of the recorded audio. If important memories or keepsakes are recorded, the real value is in being able to conveniently find and retrieve the desired cassette to play back or replay the audio memorials for family and friends.

[0003] It is also known to provide prerecorded audiocassettes for music and books and for seminar and training purposes, in album-like holders. These types of album-like holders are typically vacuum formed, custom designed for a fixed number of cassettes, each one to be stored in a recessed pocket with a relatively light snap-fit retention. These custom-designed holders are not generally available as standard products and typically are only provided once they are filled with the pre-recorded cassette series or group. Since these are pre-recorded cassettes, no options are offered for the end user to selectively record audio at special events and occasions, such as weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, retirement, etc.

[0004] The present invention has considered the various uses of blank and pre-recorded audiocassettes and envision various improvements which are directed to initial purchasing convenience, recording simplicity, long-term protection, storing security, and convenience in retrieving a specific cassette. Importantly, the present invention uses a cassette holder which is convertible from a carrying case location to a three-ring binder. This permits the use of any standard three-ring binder as a storage “album” for recorded audiocassettes, whether regular cassettes or microcassettes. While the term “cassette” as used herein refers principally to an audiocassette, some of the structures and features of the present invention could be adapted to video recording.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] A cassette recording kit for recording and preserving the audio of special events and occasions according to one embodiment of the present invention comprises a carrying case, a cassette holder insertable into the carrying case and a cassette recorder/player placeable into the carrying case with the cassette holder. A blank cassette for use in the cassette recorded/player to record audio can be included or purchased separately.

[0006] One object of the present invention is to provide an improved cassette recording kit.

[0007] Related objects and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a cassette recording kit according to a typical embodiment of the present invention.

[0009] FIG. 2 is a top plan view of a carrying case comprising one component of the FIG. 1 cassette recording kit.

[0010] FIG. 2A is a partial, side elevational view showing a carrying strap for the FIG. 2 carrying case.

[0011] FIG. 3 is a front elevational view of the FIG. 2 carrying case.

[0012] FIG. 4 is a top plan view of the FIG. 2 carrying case in an open condition.

[0013] FIG. 5 is a top plan view of one cassette holder comprising one of the components of the FIG. 1 cassette recording kit.

[0014] FIG. 6 is a front elevational view of the FIG. 5 cassette holder.

[0015] FIG. 7 is a rear elevational view of the FIG. 5 cassette holder.

[0016] FIG. 8 is a top plan view of a three-ring binder with one FIG. 5 cassette holder positioned therein and held in position by the three rings of the binder.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0017] For the purposes of promoting an understanding of the principles of the invention, reference will now be made to the embodiments illustrated in the drawings and specific language will be used to describe the same. It will nevertheless be understood that no limitation of the scope of the invention is thereby intended, such alterations and further modifications in the illustrated device, and such further applications of the principles of the invention as illustrated therein being contemplated as would normally occur to one skilled in the art to which the invention relates.

[0018] Referring to FIG. 1, there is illustrated a cassette recording kit 20 according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention. Kit 20 includes a carrying case 21, a pair of cassette holders 22, an audiocassette recorder/player 23 (with the option of having the batteries installed), one blank audiocassette 24, and an instruction book 25. The cassette recorder/player 23 is designed to operate on batteries, and kit 20 may include batteries 26, which could represent extra or spare batteries. Alternatively, or in addition to battery operation, the cassette recorder/player 23 may operate from an AC adapter 27. This AC adapter 27 can be included as part of kit 20 or can be an item that has to be separately purchased.
[0019] Cassette recording kit 20 is designed such that the carrying case 21 is sized and arranged to receive the two cassette holders 22, the cassette recorder/player 23, the blank cassette 24, and the instruction book 25. Space still remains in carrying case 21 after all of these components are inserted for receiving the extra batteries 26 and/or any AC adapter 27. Preferably, the blank cassette 24 is initially installed in either the cassette recorder/player 23 or in one of the holders 24.

[0020] By including all of the identified items as part of kit 20 and by pre-packaging the identified items into carrying case 21, all of the required items to begin audio cassette recording are provided in a single, easy to use package with its own convenient carrying case 21. The carrying case 21 is also available as a storage container to keep everything together in one, ready-to-use package. When a special event or occasion presents itself, the fully-loaded carrying case 21 merely needs to be picked up and taken to the event or occasion, knowing that everything which will be needed in order to record audio inputs during such event or occasion is contained within carrying case 21. By the use of kit 20, it is possible for the user to record audio inputs during special events and occasions, and then save the recorded audio for playback for the enjoyment of the user and/or to share with family and friends. One of the benefits of the present invention is the ability to achieve orderly storage (and indexing) of recorded cassettes. It then becomes easy to retrieve the cassette of interest for playback. The playback of audio moments from these special events and occasions can be provided for those who were unable to attend as well as years later to reminisce.

[0021] Referring more specifically to FIGS. 2-4, the details of carrying case 21 are illustrated. Carrying case 21 includes a main body 31 which in the preferred embodiment has the form of a generally rectangular box with front wall 32, rear wall 33, left side wall 34, right side wall 35, and bottom wall 36. The method of fabrication is preferably to employ a unitary construction out of a durable material which can be plastic, cardboard (either bare or covered), vinyl, or leather. If a more rigid structure for the main body 31 of carrying case 21 is preferred, plastic, cardboard, or vinyl would be preferred. With a unitary construction, there are no seams, edges, or corners to be sealed or closed.

[0022] Included as part of carrying case 21 is closing lid 39 which is preferably of a unitary construction with main body 31 and is made out of the same material or material combinations used for the fabrication of main body 31. In the context of the referenced material combinations, it should be understood that any of the base materials selected to provide some degree of rigidity and the generally rectangular box-like form can be covered with paper, fabric, or vinyl or conceivably even leather in order to create a unique and attractive appearance.

[0023] The upper edges of the front, rear, left side, and right side walls 32-35 define a generally rectangular opening 40. The closing lid 39 is constructed and arranged to close opening 40. In the preferred embodiment, a pair of snaps 41 and 42 help secure the front flap 43 of lid 39 to the front wall 32. The left side wall 34 and right side wall 35 are each configured with a free end of a flexible carrying strap 46 being secured thereto. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the carrying strap 46 is a flexible cord with a first free end 47 inserted into a first side wall eyelet 48 (see FIG. 2A) and knotted on the interior side of the eyelet 48 so that the flexible cord 46 is unable to be pulled through the eyelet. The opposite free end of the carrying strap 46 is inserted into the eyelet 48 in the opposite side wall and knotted in a similar manner in order to prevent pullout.

[0024] The top plan view of FIG. 4 shows the main body 31 in an open condition with the closing lid 39 unsnapped and pulled back so as to completely expose opening 40 and the arrangement of the main body interior. The broken lines 49, 50, and 51 generally outline the primary storage regions of the main body interior. These primary storage regions include a first region 52 for the receipt of the two cassette holders 22, a second region 53 for the receipt of the audiocassette recorder/player 23, and a third (bonus) region 54 for the receipt of miscellaneous articles such as extra batteries 26, an AC adapter 27, recorded cassettes, extra blank cassettes, or possibly a pen or labels to use in identifying what is recorded on a cassette. Another item which can be included in carrying case 21 is a disposable camera, some of which have custom markings for the specific event. While these dividing lines for regions 52-54 can be created by actually adding partitions, the preferred embodiment of the present invention does not include any partitions, due in part to the design and use of holders 22.

[0025] The inner surface 57 of bottom wall 36 includes four small rectangular strips 58, 59, 60 and 61 of one-half of a synthetic hook and loops combination, typically sold under the VELCRO® trademark. Each VELCRO® strip 58-61 is secured to surface 57 by an adhesive layer. These four strips 58-61 are positioned in a generally symmetrical manner, front-to-rear and side-to-side, within first region 52. Broken line 62 shows the approximate dividing line in a positional sense between the two locations of the two cassette holders 22.

[0026] With reference to FIGS. 5-7, the details of one cassette holder 22 are illustrated. Holder 22 is a relatively rigid, unitary member which can preferably be fabricated out of cardboard or plastic. Each holder 22 includes a base panel 65 surrounded by four side wall panels 66a-66d. Integral with side wall panels 66a are two closing tabs 67 and 68 which extend over top opening 69 and are secured to front side wall panel 66a. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, VELCRO® is used on each tab 67 and 68 and a cooperating panel of VELCRO® is adhesively attached to panel 66d. Alternatively, snaps can be used or the tongue portion of each tab 67 and 68 can be inserted into a receiving panel or slot in order to secure the tab in position and to hold any cassette within the holder 22 to prevent fallout.

[0027] Included on the interior holder 22 are two opposed divider ribs 70 and 71. These two ribs 70 and 71 divide the interior of holder 22 into two cassette storage compartments 74 and 75. Once an audiocassette (either blank or recorded) is placed in its storage compartment 74 or 75, the corresponding closing tab 67 or 68 is secured over the cassette to hold it in place. The ribs 70 and 71 prevent one cassette from sliding or shifting from one storage compartment to the adjacent storage compartment, if that adjacent storage compartment would be empty.

[0028] The front panel 66d and/or the rear panel 66b are arranged with marking areas 76 and 77, respectively, for
writing a description of what is recorded on each cassette in the particular component generally corresponding to the location of the marking. As will be seen, the long-term storage of each holder 22 in a conventional three-ring binder, see FIG. 8, enables each holder 22 to be installed front side up or front side down, and thus marking areas 76 and 77 are preferably on both sides of each cassette holder 22. The base panel 65 includes two small, generally rectangular strips 80 and 81 of VELCRO® (actually one-half of the combination of hooks and loops). These two strips 80 and 81 are adhesively attached to the exterior surface of panel 65. These two strips are designed, as far as size, shape and location, to mate with or mesh with two of the VELCRO® strips (either 58 and 59 or 60 and 61) which are adhesively secured to the inner surface 57 of bottom wall 36. As such, the lowering of holder 22 into one-half of first region 52 (divided by broken line 62) causes VELCRO® strips 80 and 81 to mesh and interlock with the corresponding pair of strips on bottom wall 36. This mesh or interlock of the two sets of VELCRO® halves anchors the holder 22 into main body 31. When it is desired to remove holder 22, it can simply be pulled free, separating the fabric panel with hooks from the fabric panel with loops. This means that the holders 22, with or without cassettes, can be removed and reinserted within the carrying case 21 repeatedly.

When it is time to consider long-term storage of one or more recorded cassettes, the holder 22 is used and can be placed in a conventional three-ring notebook or binder 82. Regardless of whether one or two cassettes are to be stored, and regardless of how much may be recorded on any one cassette, the holder 22 is still used in that it provides a means to have a topic index and a convenient means of storage and retrieval and is adapted to cooperate with a conventional three-ring binder. Replacement or additional holders are to be made available for purchase. Consequently, the user of kit 20 is able to utilize as many holders as desired for current use and for long-term storage.

In order to safely and securely retain each holder 22 in a conventional three-ring binder 82, the rear panel 66b is fitted with three tabs 83, 84, and 85 which are securely attached to panel 66b over roughly one-half of the overall tab length. Each tab is folded into a closed condition, or what might be considered a stowed condition, against the surface of panel 66b. As illustrated, each tab 83-85 is unfoldable to an extended condition, as represented by the broken line form of FIG. 7. In this illustration, the lower edge line between rear panel 66b and base panel 65 represents the coincident fold-unfold line for each tab 83-85. As will be understood, each tab 83-85 includes a circular aperture 86 whose diameter is sized so as to conveniently fit over a corresponding ring of the conventional three-ring binder 82. The centerline spacing between each pair of adjacent apertures 86 is approximately 4.25 inches which corresponds to the ring-to-ring centerline spacing of a conventional three-ring binder. In this way, each holder 22 can be mounted onto the rings and stored in that manner. It is important to note that the use of a conventional three-ring binder adds greater versatility for the end user since a specially styled or custom designed cassette album is not required. Additionally, a three-ring binder permits other pages, either of text or of photographs, or both, to be easily added. Since there are now plastic photograph sleeves or carriers which are designed to receive photographs of different sizes and which are also designed for three-ring binders, photographic pages can be inserted into binder 82 to complement the recorded audio cassettes. The pages of text and/or photographic sheets can be inserted before or after the corresponding cassette holder 22.

In this way, there will be lasting memories in both audio and video, all safely and conveniently stored together in a three-ring binder. Depending on the ring diameter of the selected binder, several holders 24 can be stored in a single binder.

While the invention has been illustrated and described in detail in the drawings and foregoing description, the same is to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive in character, it being understood that only the preferred embodiment has been shown and described and that all changes and modifications that come within the spirit of the invention are desired to be protected.

What is claimed is:

1. An audiocassette recording kit comprising:
a carrying case;
an audiocassette holder insertable into said carrying case; and
an audiocassette recorder/player placeable into said carrying case with said cassette holder.

2. The audiocassette recording kit of claim 1 which further includes a second audiocassette holder which is insertable into said carrying case.

3. The audiocassette recording kit of claim 1 wherein said carrying case includes a closeable lid.

4. The audiocassette recording kit of claim 1 wherein said carrying case includes a carrying strap.

5. The audiocassette recording kit of claim 1 wherein said audiocassette holder includes two storage compartments.

6. The audiocassette recording kit of claim 1 wherein said audiocassette holder includes three tabs for use in installing the audiocassette holder onto the rings of a three-ring binder.

7. The audiocassette recording kit of claim 1 wherein said audiocassette holder includes securing means for anchoring the audiocassette holder into the carrying case.

8. The audiocassette recording kit of claim 1 wherein said audiocassette holder further includes cover means for preventing an audiocassette stored in the audiocassette holder from falling out of said audiocassette holder.

9. The audiocassette recording kit of claim 1 which further includes a blank audiocassette for use in said audiocassette recorded/player to record audio.

10. An audiocassette holder for selectively carrying it in a carrying case and being constructed and arranged for installing it into a three-ring binder for storage, said audiocassette holder comprising:
a plurality of side walls;
a base panel surrounded by said plurality of side walls, said plurality of side walls and said base panel cooperating to define an interior space;
a divider rib separating said interior space into two storage compartments, each storage compartment being constructed and arranged to receive an audiocassette.
11. The audiocassette holder of claim 10 which further includes three tabs for use in installing the cassette holder onto the rings of a three-ring binder.

12. The audiocassette holder of claim 10 which further includes securing means for anchoring the cassette holder into said carrying case.

13. The audiocassette holder of claim 10 which further includes cover means for preventing an audiocassette stored within said audiocassette holder from falling out of said audiocassette holder.