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(54) **VEHICLE MOUNTED STORAGE UNIT**

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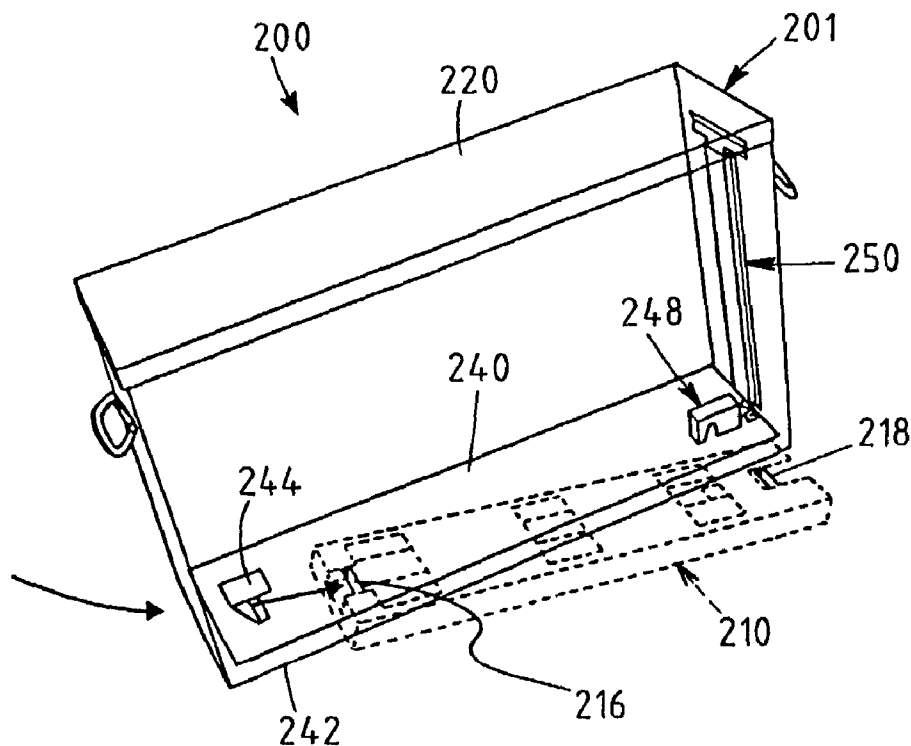
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(63) Continuation of application No. 09/359,333, filed on Jul. 21, 1999, now Pat. No. 6,203,087, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 09/030,301, filed on Feb. 25, 1998, now abandoned, which is a continuation of application No. 08/861,183, filed on May 21, 1997, now Pat. No. 5,743,584, which is a continuation of application No. 08/457,875, filed on Jun. 1, 1995, now abandoned.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A vehicle mounted storage unit, adapted to be mounted to a floor portion of a vehicle having a sidewall and a wheel well that extends outwardly from the sidewall by a first distance, includes a mounting bracket fixed to the floor portion of the vehicle and a plurality of connecting members that connect the mounting bracket to the floor portion. The mounting bracket has a width that is less than the first distance, and the mounting bracket is fixed to the floor portion of the vehicle at a mounting point adjacent the sidewall of the vehicle and adjacent the wheel well of the vehicle. The storage unit is provided with a cabinet that is attachable to the mounting bracket, with the cabinet being removable from the mounting bracket and having a width not greater than the first distance. The cabinet is adapted to be mounted adjacent the sidewall of the vehicle and adjacent the wheel well of the vehicle, with no portion of the cabinet extending beyond the wheel well of the vehicle. The storage unit is also provided with a quick-release mechanism that facilitates attachment of the cabinet to the mounting bracket and release of the cabinet from the mounting bracket, the quick-release mechanism allowing the cabinet to be mounted to the mounting bracket and removed from the mounting bracket without the use of a tool.



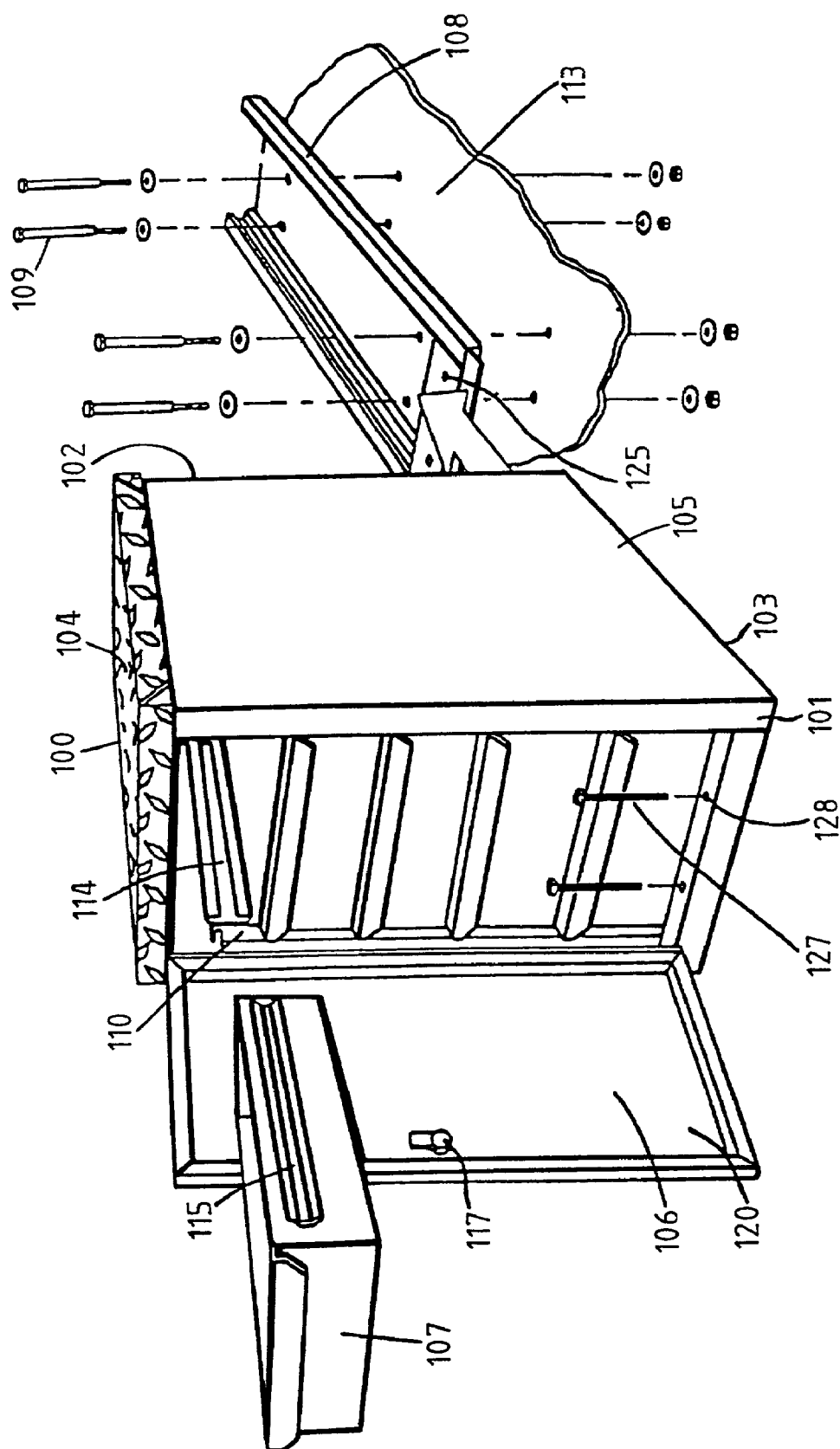


FIG. 1

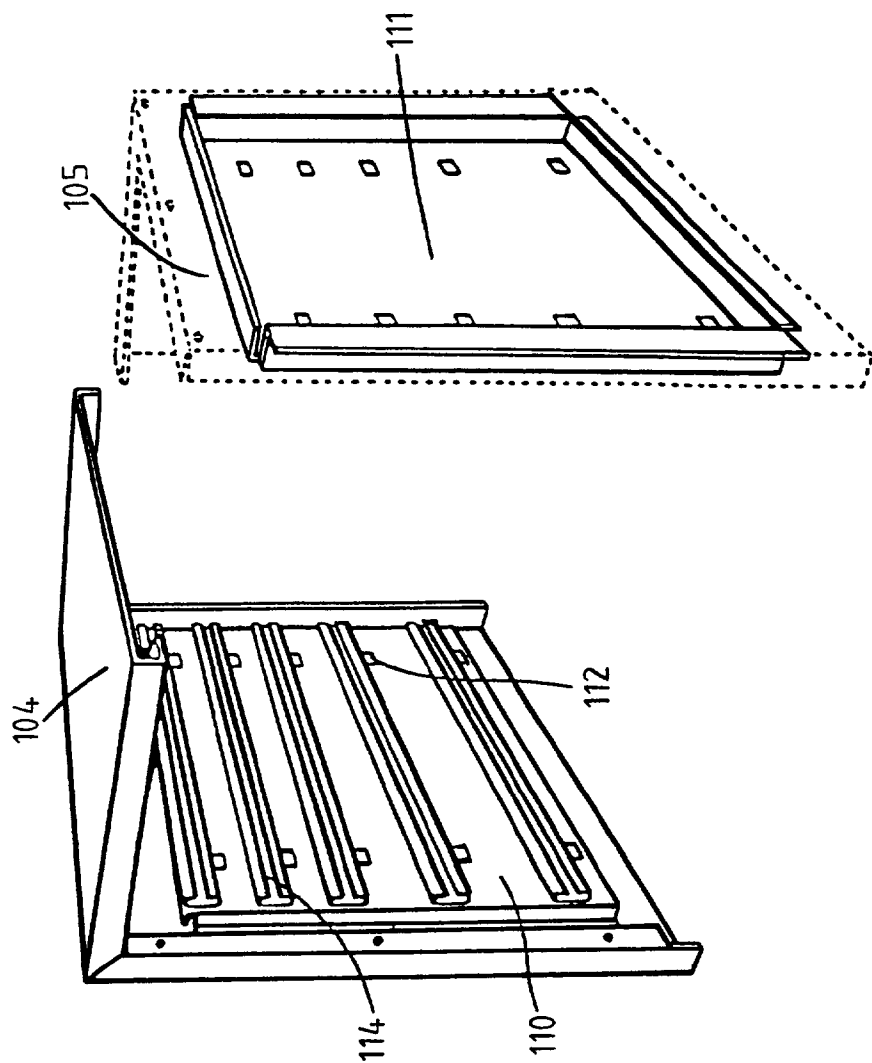


FIG. 2

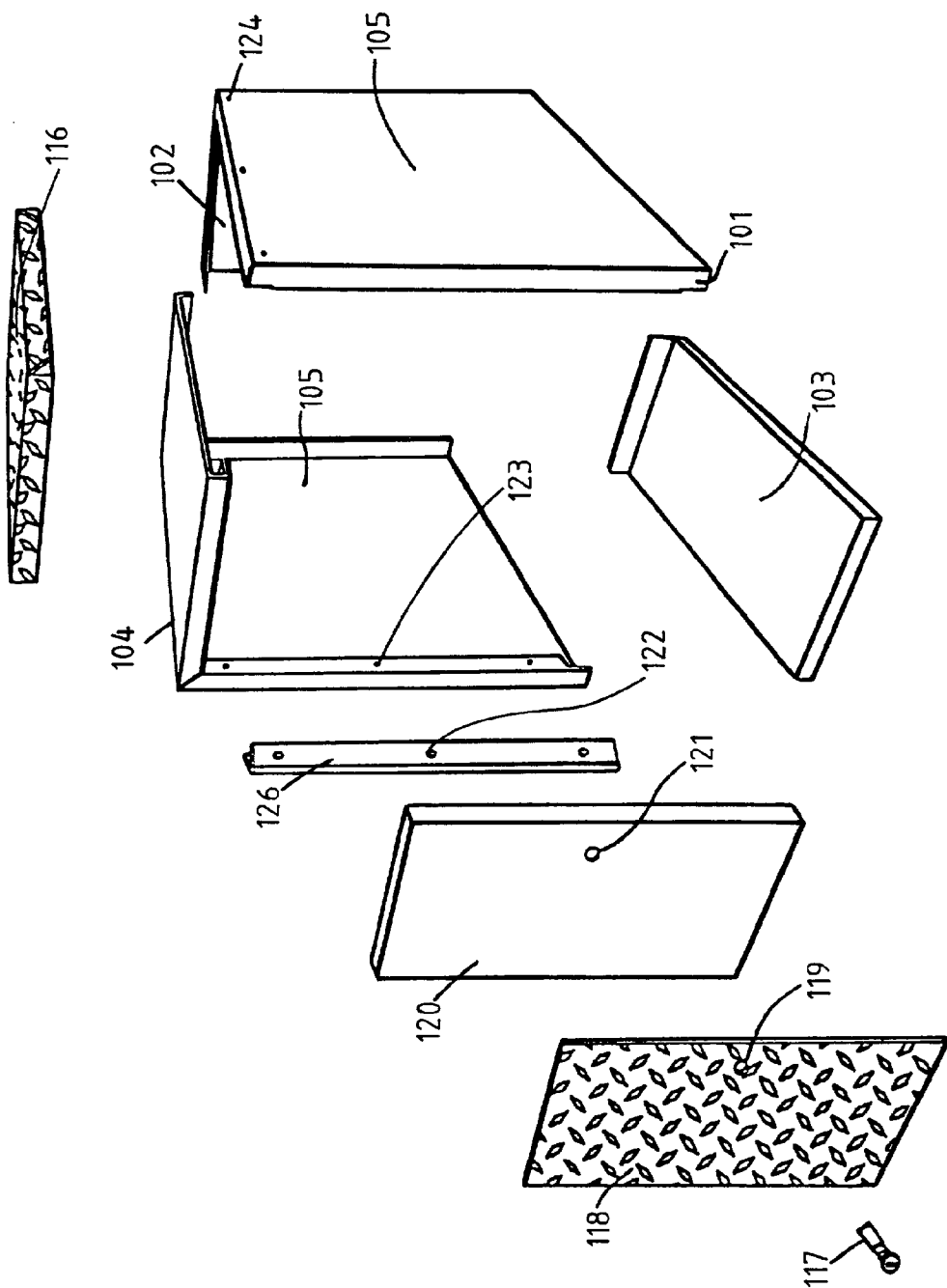


FIG. 3

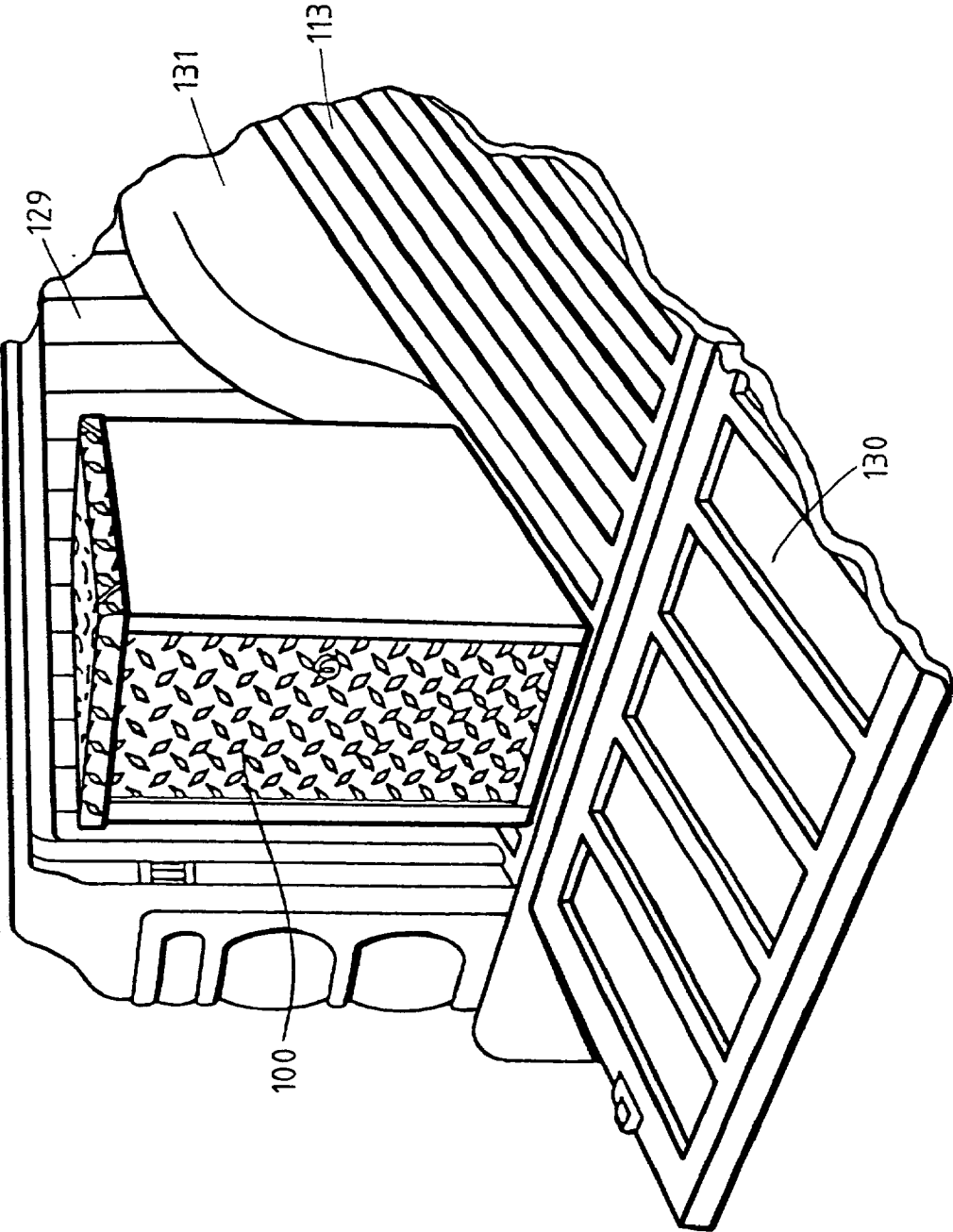


FIG. 4

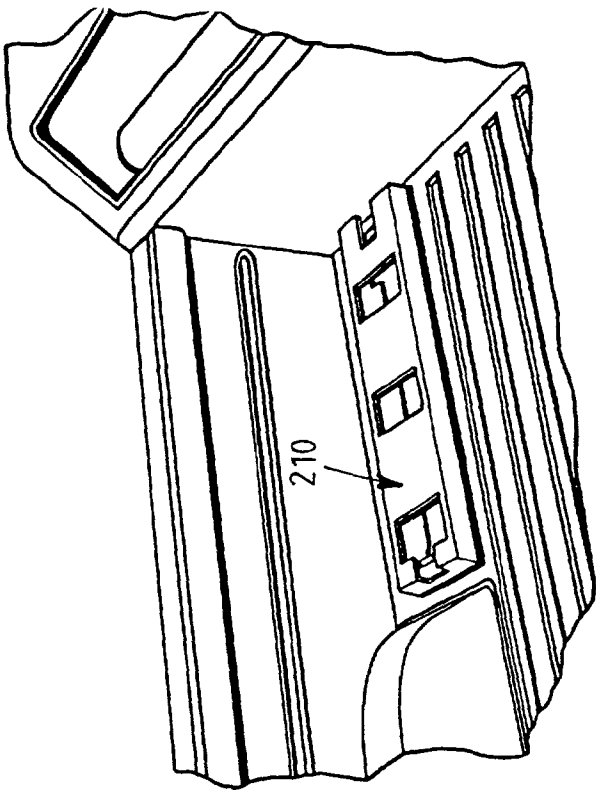


FIG. 6

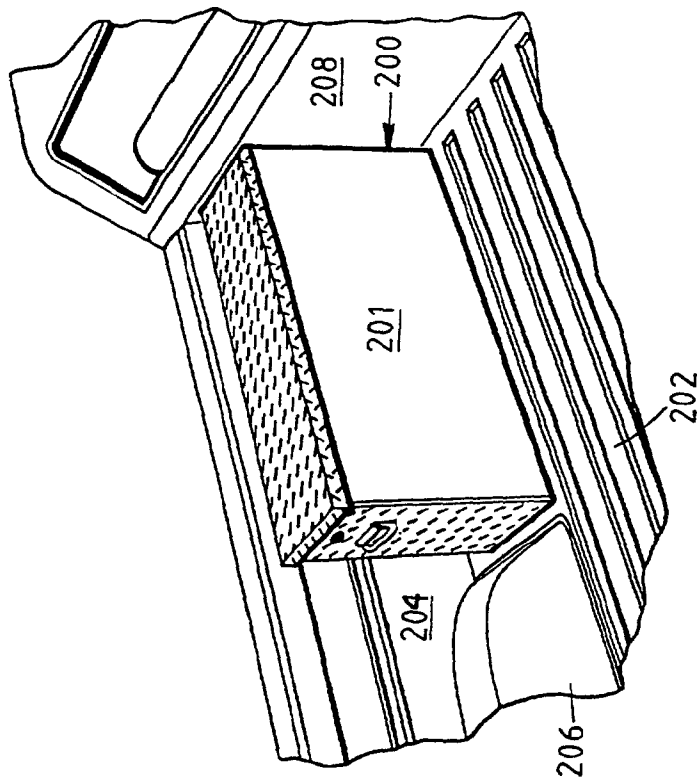


FIG. 5

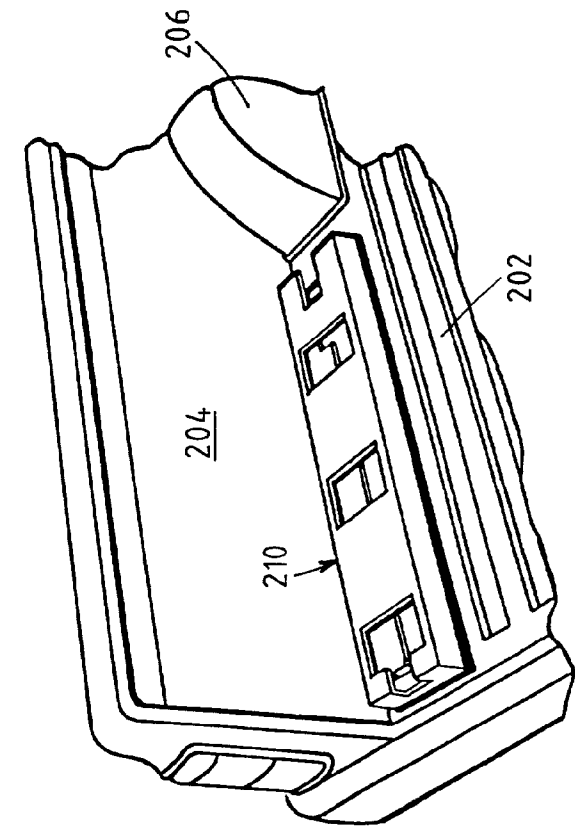


FIG. 8

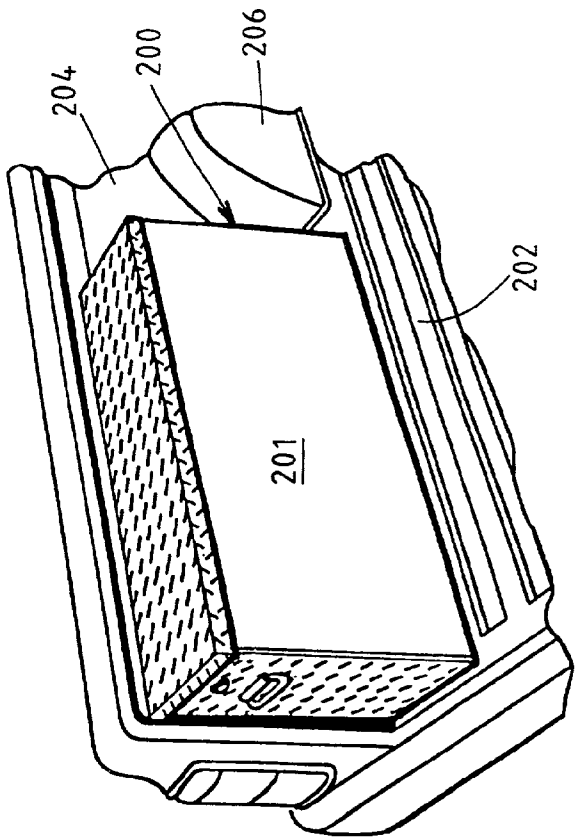


FIG. 7

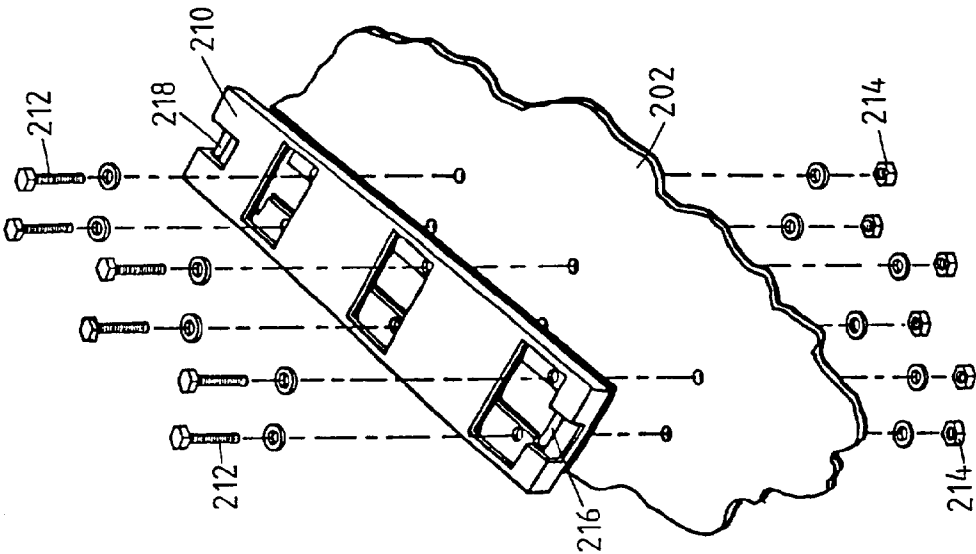


FIG. 11

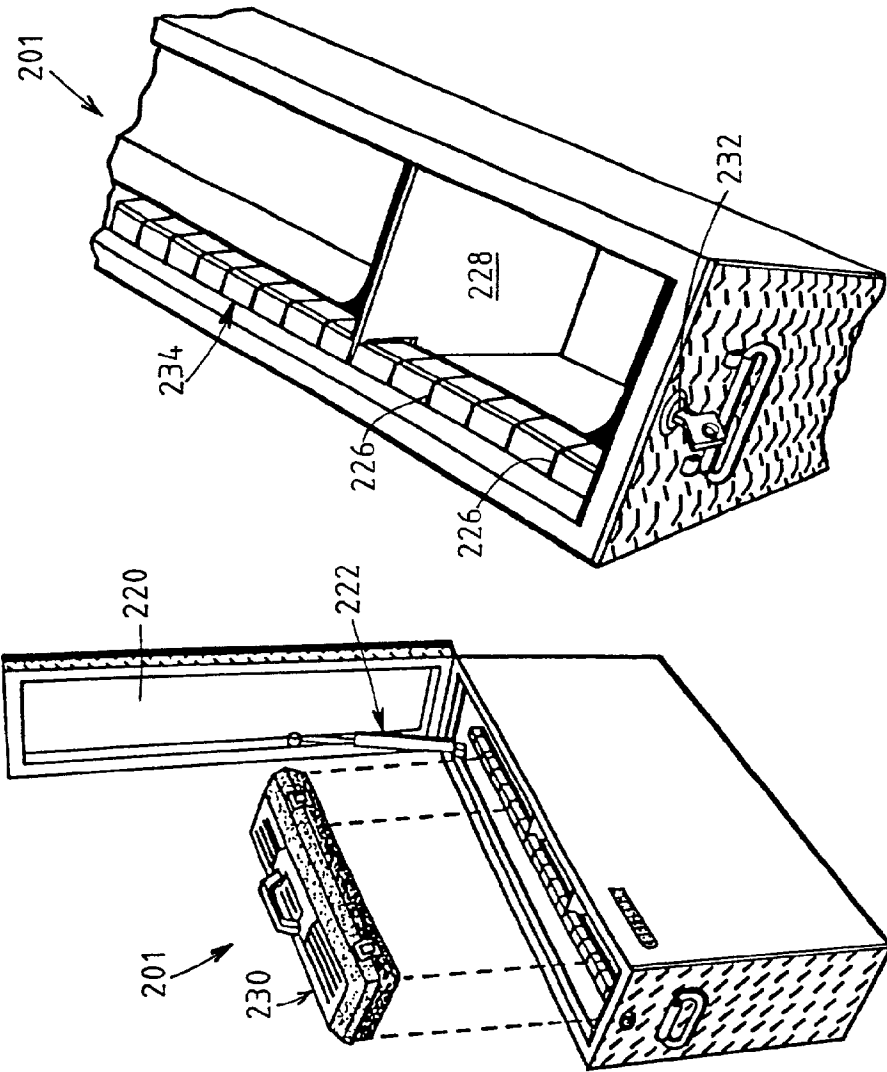


FIG. 10

FIG. 9

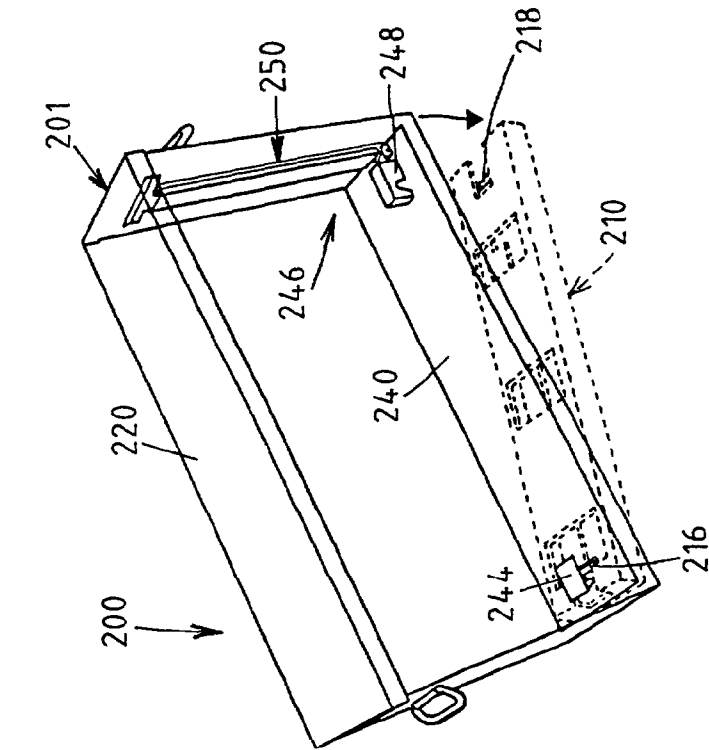


FIG. 12

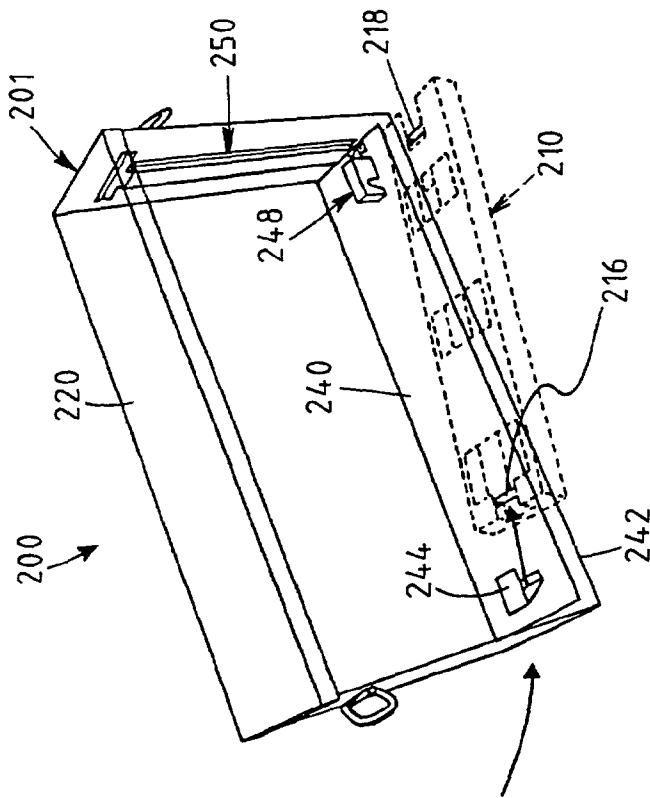
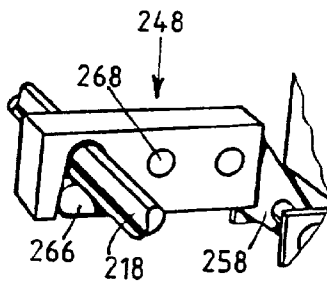
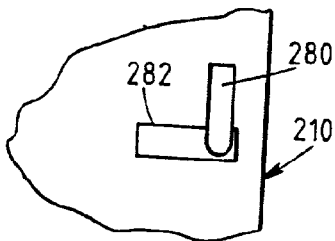
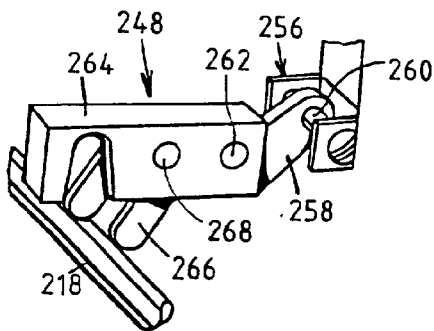
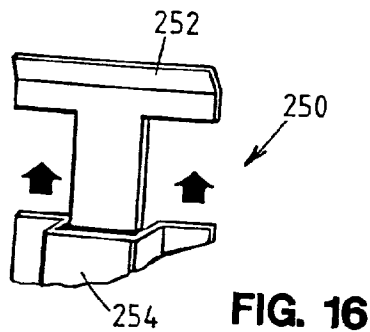
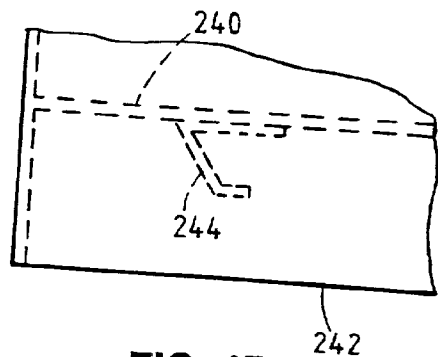
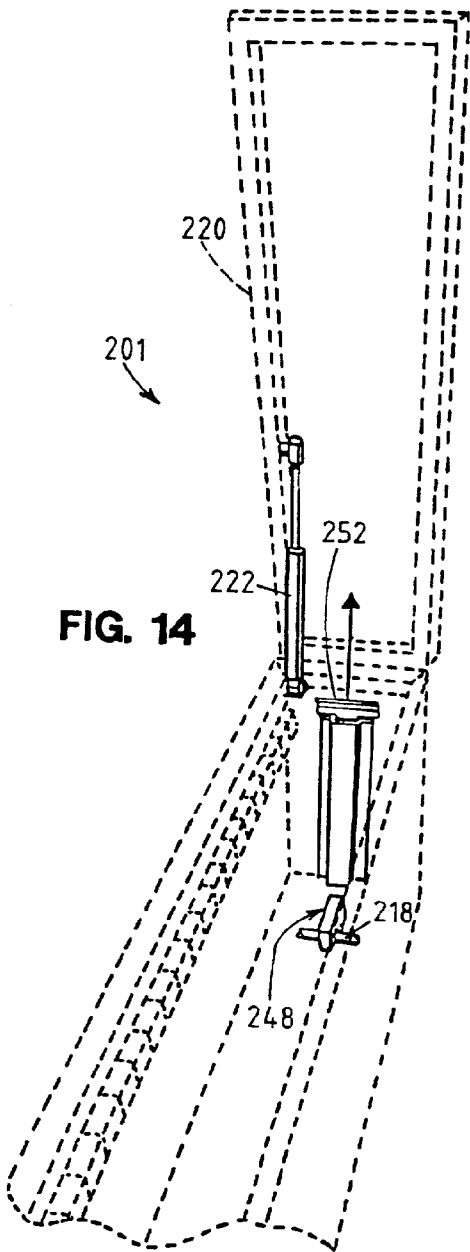


FIG. 13



VEHICLE MOUNTED STORAGE UNIT

[0001] This is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Ser. 09/030,301 filed Feb. 25, 1998, which is a continuation of U.S. Ser. No. 08/861,183 filed May 21, 1997, now U.S. Pat. No. 5,743,584, which is a continuation of abandoned U.S. Ser. No. 08/457,875 filed Jun. 1, 1995, all of which are incorporated wholly herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to a storage unit for installation in a vehicle such as a pickup truck, van, or sport utility vehicle.

[0003] U.S. Pat. No. 5,398,987 to Sturgis discloses a tool box assembly for use in the bed of a pickup truck. The tool box assembly is composed of a storage container **24** that is mounted to the bed of the pickup truck and a tool box **26** that is pivotally mounted to the storage container **24** about a vertical pivot axis. The storage container **24** has a door **32** that is movable between an open position and a closed position, and the tool box **26** has a plurality of drawers **134**, **135**.

[0004] As shown in **FIG. 1** of the Sturgis patent, the Sturgis tool box **26** is pivotable between a first position in which the tool box **26** is disposed within the storage container **24** and a second position in which the tool box **26** is disposed outside the storage container **24**. When the tool box **26** is in the second position, the drawers **134**, **135** of the tool box **26** may be pulled out of the tool box **26** in a direction towards the rear of the pickup truck.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The invention is directed to a vehicle mounted storage unit adapted to be mounted to a floor portion of a vehicle having a sidewall and a wheel well that extends outwardly from the sidewall by a first distance. The vehicle mounted storage unit includes a mounting bracket adapted to be fixed to the floor portion of the vehicle and a plurality of connecting members adapted to connect the mounting bracket to the floor portion of the vehicle at the mounting point. The mounting bracket has a width that is less than the first distance, and the mounting bracket is adapted to be fixed to the floor portion of the vehicle at a mounting point adjacent the sidewall of the vehicle and adjacent the wheel well of the vehicle.

[0006] The storage unit is provided with a cabinet that is attachable to the mounting bracket, with the cabinet being removable from the mounting bracket and having a width not greater than the first distance. The cabinet is adapted to be mounted adjacent the sidewall of the vehicle and adjacent the wheel well of the vehicle, with no portion of the cabinet extending beyond the wheel well of the vehicle. The storage unit is also provided with a quick-release mechanism that facilitates attachment of the cabinet to the mounting bracket and release of the cabinet from the mounting bracket.

[0007] The quick-release mechanism may be disposed within an interior portion of the cabinet, and the storage unit may also be provided with a door connected to the cabinet, with the door being movable between an open position in which the quick-release mechanism may be activated and a closed position in which the door prevents access to the quick-release mechanism. The storage unit is also provided

with a lock associated with the door to lock the door in the closed position to prevent access to the quick-release mechanism.

[0008] The features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art in view of the detailed description of the preferred embodiments, which is made with reference to the drawings, a brief description of which is provided below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of a first embodiment of a storage unit in accordance with the invention;

[0010] **FIG. 2** is a fragmentary, perspective view of a portion of the interior of the cabinet of the storage unit of **FIG. 1**;

[0011] **FIG. 3** is a fragmentary, perspective view of the cabinet of the storage unit of **FIG. 1**;

[0012] **FIG. 4** is a perspective view of a vehicle in which the storage unit of **FIG. 1** is installed;

[0013] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view of a second embodiment of a storage unit in accordance with the invention shown mounted in front of the wheel well of a pickup truck;

[0014] **FIG. 6** is a perspective view of a mounting bracket of the storage unit of **FIG. 5** shown mounted in front of the wheel well of a pickup truck;

[0015] **FIG. 7** is a perspective view of the storage unit of **FIG. 5** shown mounted behind the wheel well of a pickup truck;

[0016] **FIG. 8** is a perspective view of the mounting bracket shown mounted behind the wheel well of a pickup truck;

[0017] **FIG. 9** is a perspective view of the storage unit of **FIG. 5** with its lid open;

[0018] **FIG. 10** is a perspective view of the interior of the storage unit of **FIG. 5**;

[0019] **FIG. 11** is an exploded perspective view of how the mounting bracket mounts to the bed of the pickup truck;

[0020] **FIGS. 12 and 13** illustrate how the storage unit mounts to the mounting bracket;

[0021] **FIGS. 14-18** illustrate various mounting components of the storage unit of **FIG. 5**; and

[0022] **FIG. 19** is a bottom view of a portion of an alternative quick-release mechanism that could be used with the storage unit of **FIG. 5**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0023] A storage unit **100** in accordance with one embodiment of the invention is shown in **FIGS. 1 and 3**. The storage unit **100** comprises a cabinet **106** having a front **101**, a back **102**, a bottom **103**, a top **104** and two sides **105**. A door **120** in the front **101** provides access to the contents of the cabinet. As shown in **FIGS. 1 and 3**, the door **120** is mounted at holes **122** to a continuous hinge **126**, which is mounted at holes **123** to the cabinet **106**. A cam lock **117**

mounted in the door **120** allows the cabinet **106** to be locked, thereby securing the contents.

[0024] The cabinet **106** may be mounted to the cargo area of a vehicle by attaching it to a mounting bracket **108**, as shown in FIG. 1. The mounting bracket **108** may be bolted **109** or otherwise firmly attached to the floor **113** of the cargo area so that the mounting bracket may not be quickly and easily removed. The cabinet **106** may then be secured to the mounting bracket **108** by screws **127**, which extend through holes **128** in the cabinet into holes **125** in the mounting bracket. Holes **128** are located inside of cabinet **106** such that screws **127** may be inserted or removed only if door **120** is open. This mounting arrangement allows the cabinet **106** to be easily detached and removed from the vehicle by simply removing the screws **127**, but deters theft by preventing removal of the cabinet **106** when the door **120** is closed and locked.

[0025] The storage unit may be made of any of a variety of materials. For example, the cabinet **106** may be made of sheet metal, and the top **104** and door **120** may be reinforced with aluminum tread plates **116** and **118**. The lock **117** extends through the door **120**, at hole **121**, and through the aluminum tread plate **118**, at hole **119**. As shown in FIGS. 1 and 3, the panels are joined by rivets **124**, but any known method may be used to join the panels. The top **104** and one side **105** may be formed from a single piece of material, and the back **102** and the second side **105** may be formed from a single piece of material. This construction reduces production costs and results in a stronger cabinet.

[0026] The interior of the cabinet **106** may be fitted with drawers **107** to provide easier access to the contents of the cabinet **106**. As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, to accommodate drawers **107**, the interior of the cabinet **106** may be fitted with side walls **111**. The side walls may comprise a drawer slide mounting assembly **110** having slide rails **114** on which the drawers **107** may slide, and locating shear forms **112** on which the slide rails **114** may be mounted. Corresponding slide rails **115** may then be mounted on the drawers **107**. The slide rails **114** permit the drawers **107** to be fully extended or removed from the cabinet **106**, as shown in FIG. 1, so that the entire length of each drawer may be used.

[0027] The storage unit **100** may be mounted to the vehicle bed **113**, as shown in FIG. 4, along the sidewall of the cargo area **129** behind the wheel well **131** and adjacent to the tailgate or rear **130** of the vehicle. In other types of vehicles, such as vans, the storage unit **100** may be mounted adjacent a rear or side door. These locations allow easy access to the contents of the storage unit, without reaching over the sidewall or climbing into the cargo area, and minimize interference with use of the cargo area for carrying cargo.

[0028] A second embodiment of a storage unit **200** in accordance with the invention is shown in FIGS. 5-17. As shown in FIG. 5, the storage unit **200** has a storage cabinet **201** that may be removably mounted to a floor portion **202** of a vehicle, such as a pickup truck, at a mounting location adjacent a sidewall **204** of the vehicle and located between a wheel well **206** of the vehicle and an interior wall surface **208** of the vehicle. The storage cabinet **201** has a width that is not greater than the distance between the sidewall **204** of the vehicle and the outer surface of the wheel well **206** so that when the storage unit **201** is mounted adjacent the

sidewall **204**, no portion of the storage cabinet **201** extends outwardly beyond the wheel well **206**.

[0029] The storage unit **201** is removably mounted to the floor portion **202** of the vehicle via a mounting bracket **210** that is fixed to the floor portion **202** of the vehicle. Referring to FIG. 11, the mounting bracket **210** may be fixed to the floor portion **202** of the vehicle in any suitable manner, such as by a plurality of bolts **212** and nuts **214**. To facilitate the removable mounting of the storage cabinet **201** to the mounting bracket **210**, the mounting bracket **210** has a first connecting rod **216** disposed adjacent one end of the mounting bracket **210** and a second connecting rod **218** disposed adjacent an opposite end of the mounting bracket **210**.

[0030] As shown in FIGS. 7-8, the storage cabinet **201** and the mounting bracket **210** may be mounted to the floor **202** of the vehicle at a point behind the wheel well **206**, so that the storage cabinet **201** occupies the space adjacent the sidewall **204** of the vehicle and between the wheel well **206** and a rear door (not shown) of the vehicle. When mounted at this location, no portion of the storage cabinet **201** extends beyond the wheel well **206** of the vehicle.

[0031] The storage cabinet **201** may be provided with a height that does not exceed the height of the sidewall **204**, and the storage cabinet **201** may be provided in different lengths so as to completely fill the space between the wheel well **206** and rear door of the vehicle, when mounted as shown in FIG. 7, or the space between the wheel well **206** and the internal wall **208** of the vehicle, when mounted as shown in FIG. 5.

[0032] Referring to FIGS. 9-10, the storage cabinet **201** may have a hinged door **220**. The opening and closing of the door **220** may be assisted by a damping assembly, such as a piston-and-cylinder assembly **222**. The interior of the storage cabinet **201** may have one or more guide rails **224** having a plurality of slots **226** formed therein, with each of the slots **226** being sized to receive a vertically disposed divider plate **228** for dividing the interior of the storage cabinet **201** into compartments of the desired size. The storage cabinet **201** may be provided with a separate utility box **230**, which may be used to store relatively small items, that covers the interior of the storage cabinet **201** and over which the door **220** may be closed. The storage cabinet **201** may also have a lock **232** for locking the door **220** in place in its closed position.

[0033] Referring to FIGS. 12-13, the storage cabinet **201** has a horizontally disposed bottom plate **240**. As shown in FIG. 15, the bottom plate **240** is disposed at a higher elevation than a bottom rectangular edge **242** of the storage cabinet **201**. A latch member in the form of a generally C-shaped latch **244** is mounted to the lower surface of the bottom plate **240**, and a quick-release mechanism **246** is disposed in an interior portion of the storage cabinet **201**.

[0034] The quick-release mechanism **246**, which may be designed to allow the cabinet **201** to be mounted to the mounting bracket **210** and removed from the mounting bracket **210** without the use of a tool, such as a screwdriver or wrench, is composed of a latching mechanism **248** and an actuating mechanism **250** operatively coupled to the latching mechanism **248**. The latching mechanism **248** is mounted to the underside of the bottom plate **240** adjacent one end of the storage cabinet **201**, and the C-shaped latch **244** is mounted

to the underside of the bottom plate 240 adjacent the opposite end of the storage cabinet 201.

[0035] As shown in FIG. 16, the actuating mechanism 250 may comprise a T-shaped actuator 252 that is slidably disposed within a guide member 254 fixed to an end wall of the storage cabinet 201. As shown in FIG. 17, the lower end of the actuator 252 may be connected to, or provided in the form of, a U-shaped connecting member 256. The U-shaped connecting member 256 may be connected to a release arm 258 of the latching member 248 via a bolt 260, with the release arm 258 being pivotally connected to the latching mechanism 248 via a rod 262. The release arm 258 may be spring-biased via a torsion spring (not shown) wrapped around the rod 262.

[0036] Referring to FIGS. 17-18, the latching mechanism 248 has a housing 264 and a U-shaped latching member 266 which is pivotally connected to the housing 264 via a rod 268. The U-shaped latching member 266 is sized and adapted to receive the connecting rod 218 fixed to the mounting bracket 210. The U-shaped latching member 266 may be spring-biased via a torsion spring (not shown) wrapped around the rod 268.

[0037] The U-shaped latching member 266 is operatively coupled to the release arm 258 in the manner described below. When the latching member 266 is pivoted from an unlocked position as shown in FIG. 17 to a locked position as shown in FIG. 18, the release arm 258 is caused to move from a raised position as shown in FIG. 17 to a lowered position as shown in FIG. 18. The U-shaped latching member 266 will remain in its locked position, as shown in FIG. 18, until the release arm 258 is forced to its raised position, as shown in FIG. 17, at which point the latching member 266 will be caused to move to its unlocked position.

[0038] After the mounting bracket 210 is mounted to a desired position, as shown in FIGS. 6 and 8 for example, the storage cabinet 201 may be mounted to the mounting bracket 210. In order to accomplish such mounting, the end of the storage cabinet 201 is moved horizontally relative to the mounting bracket 210, as shown in FIG. 12, until the connecting rod 216 fixed to the mounting bracket 210 is captured within the C-shaped latch 244 fixed to the underside of the storage cabinet 201. Then (with the latch mechanism 248 in its unlocked position as shown in FIG. 17) the opposite end of the storage cabinet 201 may be lowered, with the latching mechanism 248 above the connecting rod 218, until the connecting rod 218 is received within the U-shaped member 266 of the latching mechanism 248. Further downward movement of the storage cabinet 201 will cause the connecting rod 218 to force the latching mechanism 218 from its unlocked position, as shown in FIG. 17, to its locked position, as shown in FIG. 18.

[0039] The storage cabinet 201 may be removed from the mounting bracket 210 by pulling up on the actuator 252, which will cause the release arm 258 to pivot upwardly, which in turn will cause the U-shaped latch to move from its locked position as shown in FIG. 18 to its unlocked position as shown in FIG. 17, thus allowing the end of the storage cabinet 201 to be lifted off of the mounting bracket 210, and then slid so that the connecting rod 216 is no longer disposed within the C-shaped latch 244.

[0040] The lock 232 (FIG. 10) effectively prevents or deters theft of the storage cabinet 201 since the only way to

release the storage cabinet 201 from the mounting bracket 210 is to pull up the actuator 252 and since the actuator 252 is disposed within the locked interior of the storage cabinet 201.

[0041] The latching mechanism 248 shown in FIGS. 17 and 18 and described above is a conventional device that is commercially available from Eberhard Manufacturing Co. Although a specific latching mechanism has been described above, the particular type of latching mechanism used is not considered important to the invention, and any type of latching mechanism could be used.

[0042] Referring to FIG. 19, which is a bottom view of a portion of the mounting bracket 210 and a portion of an alternative quick-release mechanism, the alternative quick-release mechanism could be provided in the form of a rotatable rod having an upper end (which could be L-shaped, for example) located at a position generally coinciding with the T-shaped top of the actuator 252 and an L-shaped lower end 280 which is selectively rotatable relative to a slot 282 formed in the mounting bracket 210. When the L-shaped lower end 280 is rotated to its position shown in FIG. 19, in which the lower end 280 is not aligned with the slot 282 in the mounting bracket 210, removal of the storage cabinet 201 (to which the rotatable rod is fixed) from the mounting bracket 210 would be prevented. When the rotatable rod is aligned with the slot 282, so that its lower end 280 may pass through the slot 282, the rotatable rod and the storage cabinet 201 to which it is connected may be removed from the mounting bracket 210.

[0043] To prevent the rotatable rod from being inadvertently moved to its unlocked position, the rotatable rod could be spring-biased upwardly, and an upwardly extending groove or indentation (not shown) could be formed in the plate in which the slot 282 is formed, to cause the lower end 280 to become seated within the groove when in the locked position, so that rod could only be rotated by simultaneously pressing down and rotating the rod.

[0044] Modifications and alternative embodiments of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art in view of the foregoing description. This description is to be construed as illustrative only, and is for the purpose of teaching those skilled in the art the best mode of carrying out the invention. The details of the structure and method may be varied substantially without departing from the spirit of the invention, and the exclusive use of all modifications which come within the scope of the appended claims is reserved.

What is claimed is:

1. A vehicle mounted storage unit mounted to a floor portion of a vehicle having a sidewall and a wheel well having a portion which extends outwardly from said sidewall by a first distance, said vehicle mounted storage unit comprising:

a mounting bracket fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle, said mounting bracket having a width that is less than said first distance, said mounting bracket being fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle at a mounting point adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and adjacent said wheel well of said vehicle;

- a plurality of connecting members that connect said mounting bracket to said floor portion of said vehicle at said mounting point;
 - a first latch member fixed to said mounting bracket;
 - a cabinet that is attachable to said mounting bracket, said cabinet being removable from said mounting bracket and having a width not greater than said first distance, said cabinet being disposed adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and adjacent said wheel well of said vehicle, with no portion of said cabinet extending beyond said wheel well of said vehicle;
 - a quick-release mechanism that facilitates attachment of said cabinet to said mounting bracket and release of said cabinet from said mounting bracket, said quick-release mechanism allowing said cabinet to be mounted to said mounting bracket and removed from said mounting bracket without the use of a tool, said quick-release mechanism being disposed within an interior portion of said cabinet and being disposed adjacent a first end of said cabinet;
 - a door connected to said cabinet, said door being movable between an open position in which said quick-release mechanism may be activated and a closed position in which said door prevents access to said quick-release mechanism;
 - a lock associated with said door, said lock locking said door in said closed position to prevent access to said quick-release mechanism; and
 - a second latch member, said second latch member being coupled to said cabinet adjacent a second end of said cabinet opposite said first end of said cabinet, said second latch member being adapted to connect to said first latch member.
2. A vehicle mounted storage unit mounted to a floor portion of a vehicle having a sidewall and a wheel well having a portion which extends outwardly from said sidewall by a first distance, said vehicle mounted storage unit comprising:
- a mounting bracket fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle, said mounting bracket having a width that is less than said first distance, said mounting bracket being fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle at a mounting point adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and adjacent said wheel well of said vehicle;
 - a plurality of connecting members that connect said mounting bracket to said floor portion of said vehicle at said mounting point;
 - a cabinet that is attachable to said mounting bracket, said cabinet being removable from said mounting bracket and having a width not greater than said first distance, said cabinet being disposed adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and adjacent said wheel well of said vehicle, with no portion of said cabinet extending beyond said wheel well of said vehicle; and
 - a quick-release mechanism that facilitates attachment of said cabinet to said mounting bracket and release of said cabinet from said mounting bracket, said quick-release mechanism allowing said cabinet to be mounted to said mounting bracket and removed from said mounting bracket without the use of a tool.
3. A storage unit as defined in claim 2 wherein said quick-release mechanism is disposed within an interior portion of said cabinet and wherein said storage unit additionally comprises:
- a door connected to said cabinet, said door being movable between an open position in which said quick-release mechanism may be activated and a closed position in which said door prevents access to said quick-release mechanism; and
 - a lock associated with said door, said lock locking said door in said closed position to prevent access to said quick-release mechanism.
4. A storage unit as defined in claim 2 additionally comprising a door pivotally connected to said cabinet, said door being movable between an open position in which an interior portion of said cabinet is exposed and a closed position in which said door covers said interior portion of said cabinet.
5. A storage unit as defined in claim 2 wherein said quick-release mechanism is attached to said cabinet adjacent a first end of said cabinet and wherein said storage unit additionally comprises:
- a first latch member fixed to said mounting bracket; and
 - a second latch member, said second latch member being coupled to said cabinet adjacent a second end of said cabinet opposite said first end of said cabinet, said second latch member being adapted to connect to said first latch member.
6. A vehicle mounted storage unit mounted to a floor portion of a vehicle having a sidewall, a wheel well having a portion which extends outwardly from said sidewall by a first distance, and a rear door that is movable between a closed position and an open position, said rear door being spaced from a rear portion of said wheel well by a second distance, said vehicle mounted storage unit comprising:
- a mounting bracket fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle, said mounting bracket having a width that is not greater than said first distance and a length that is not greater than said second distance, said mounting bracket being fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle at a mounting point adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and between said rear portion of said wheel well and said rear door of said vehicle;
 - a plurality of connecting members that connect said mounting bracket to said floor portion of said vehicle at said mounting point;
 - a cabinet fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle, said cabinet having a width not greater than said first distance and a length not greater than said second distance, said cabinet being disposed adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and between said wheel well and said rear door of said vehicle, with no portion of said cabinet extending outside of a space bounded by a horizontal plane coinciding with said floor portion of said vehicle, a first vertical plane coinciding with an interior portion of said sidewall of said vehicle, a second vertical plane coinciding with said outwardly extending portion of said wheel well, a third vertical plane coinciding with said rear portion of said wheel

well, and a fourth vertical plane coinciding with an interior portion of said rear door; and

- a quick-release mechanism that facilitates attachment of said cabinet to said mounting bracket and release of said cabinet from said mounting bracket, said quick-release mechanism allowing said cabinet to be mounted to said mounting bracket and removed from said mounting bracket without the use of a tool.

7. A storage unit as defined in claim 6 wherein said quick-release mechanism is disposed within an interior portion of said cabinet and wherein said storage unit additionally comprises:

- a door connected to said cabinet, said door being movable between an open position in which said quick-release mechanism may be activated and a closed position in which said door prevents access to said quick-release mechanism; and
- a lock associated with said door, said lock locking said door in said closed position to prevent access to said quick-release mechanism.

8. A storage unit as defined in claim 6 additionally comprising a door pivotally connected to said cabinet, said door being movable between an open position in which an interior portion of said cabinet is exposed and a closed position in which said door covers said interior portion of said cabinet.

9. A storage unit as defined in claim 6 wherein said quick-release mechanism is attached to said cabinet adjacent a first end of said cabinet and wherein said storage unit additionally comprises:

- a first latch member fixed to said mounting bracket; and
- a second latch member, said second latch member being coupled to said cabinet adjacent a second end of said cabinet opposite said first end of said cabinet, said second latch member being adapted to connect to said first latch member.

10. A vehicle mounted storage unit mounted to a floor portion of a vehicle having a sidewall, a wheel well having a portion which extends outwardly from said sidewall by a first distance, and a vehicle surface that is perpendicular to said sidewall, said vehicle surface being spaced from a front portion of said wheel well by a second distance, said vehicle mounted storage unit comprising:

- a mounting bracket fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle, said mounting bracket having a width that is not greater than said first distance and a length that is not greater than said second distance, said mounting bracket being fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle at a mounting point adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and between said front portion of said wheel well and said vehicle surface;
- a plurality of connecting members that connect said mounting bracket to said floor portion of said vehicle at said mounting point;
- a cabinet fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle, said cabinet having a width not greater than said first distance and a length not greater than said second distance, said cabinet being disposed adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and between said front portion of said wheel well and said vehicle surface, with no

portion of said cabinet extending outside of a space bounded by a horizontal plane coinciding with said floor portion of said vehicle, a first vertical plane coinciding with an interior portion of said sidewall of said vehicle, a second vertical plane coinciding with said outwardly extending portion of said wheel well, a third vertical plane coinciding with said front portion of said wheel well, and a fourth vertical plane coinciding with said vehicle surface; and

- a quick-release mechanism that facilitates attachment of said cabinet to said mounting bracket and release of said cabinet from said mounting bracket, said quick-release mechanism allowing said cabinet to be mounted to said mounting bracket and removed from said mounting bracket without the use of a tool.

11. A storage unit as defined in claim 10 wherein said quick-release mechanism is disposed within an interior portion of said cabinet and wherein said storage unit additionally comprises:

- a door connected to said cabinet, said door being movable between an open position in which said quick-release mechanism may be activated and a closed position in which said door prevents access to said quick-release mechanism; and

- a lock associated with said door, said lock locking said door in said closed position to prevent access to said quick-release mechanism.

12. A storage unit as defined in claim 10 additionally comprising a door pivotally connected to said cabinet, said door being movable between an open position in which an interior portion of said cabinet is exposed and a closed position in which said door covers said interior portion of said cabinet.

13. A storage unit as defined in claim 10 wherein said quick-release mechanism is attached to said cabinet adjacent a first end of said cabinet and wherein said storage unit additionally comprises:

- a first latch member fixed to said mounting bracket; and
- a second latch member, said second latch member being coupled to said cabinet adjacent a second end of said cabinet opposite said first end of said cabinet, said second latch member being adapted to connect to said first latch member.

14. A vehicle mounted storage unit adapted to be mounted to a floor portion of a vehicle having a sidewall and a wheel well having a portion which extends outwardly from said sidewall by a first distance, said vehicle mounted storage unit comprising:

- a mounting bracket adapted to be fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle, said mounting bracket having a width that is less than said first distance, said mounting bracket being fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle at a mounting point adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and adjacent said wheel well of said vehicle;
- a plurality of connecting members adapted to connect said mounting bracket to said floor portion of said vehicle at said mounting point;
- a cabinet that is attachable to said mounting bracket, said cabinet being removable from said mounting bracket and having a width not greater than said first distance,

said cabinet being disposed adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and adjacent said wheel well of said vehicle, with no portion of said cabinet extending beyond said wheel well of said vehicle; and

- a quick-release mechanism that facilitates attachment of said cabinet to said mounting bracket and release of said cabinet from said mounting bracket.

15. A storage unit as defined in claim 14 additionally comprising a door pivotally connected to said cabinet, said door being movable between an open position in which an interior portion of said cabinet is exposed and a closed position in which said door covers said interior portion of said cabinet.

16. A storage unit as defined in claim 14 wherein said quick-release mechanism is attached to said cabinet adjacent a first end of said cabinet and wherein said storage unit additionally comprises:

- a first latch member fixed to said mounting bracket; and
- a second latch member, said second latch member being coupled to said cabinet adjacent a second end of said cabinet opposite said first end of said cabinet, said second latch member being adapted to connect to said first latch member.

17. A vehicle mounted storage unit adapted to be mounted to a floor portion of a vehicle having a sidewall and a wheel well having a portion which extends outwardly from said sidewall by a first distance, said vehicle mounted storage unit comprising:

- a mounting bracket adapted to be fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle, said mounting bracket having a width that is less than said first distance, said mounting bracket being fixed to said floor portion of said vehicle at a mounting point adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and adjacent said wheel well of said vehicle;
- a plurality of connecting members adapted to connect said mounting bracket to said floor portion of said vehicle at said mounting point;

a cabinet that is attachable to said mounting bracket, said cabinet being removable from said mounting bracket and having a width not greater than said first distance, said cabinet being disposed adjacent said sidewall of said vehicle and adjacent said wheel well of said vehicle, with no portion of said cabinet extending beyond said wheel well of said vehicle;

- a quick-release mechanism that facilitates attachment of said cabinet to said mounting bracket and release of said cabinet from said mounting bracket, said quick-release mechanism allowing said cabinet to be mounted to said mounting bracket and removed from said mounting bracket without the use of a tool, said quick-release mechanism being disposed within an interior portion of said cabinet;

a door connected to said cabinet, said door being movable between an open position in which said quick-release mechanism may be activated and a closed position in which said door prevents access to said quick-release mechanism; and

- a lock associated with said door, said lock locking said door in said closed position to prevent access to said quick-release mechanism.

18. A storage unit as defined in claim 17 wherein said quick-release mechanism is attached to said cabinet adjacent a first end of said cabinet and wherein said storage unit additionally comprises:

- a first latch member fixed to said mounting bracket; and
- a second latch member, said second latch member being coupled to said cabinet adjacent a second end of said cabinet opposite said first end of said cabinet, said second latch member being adapted to connect to said first latch member.

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