

[54] **UTILITY GUN RACK FOR BOATS AND THE LIKE**

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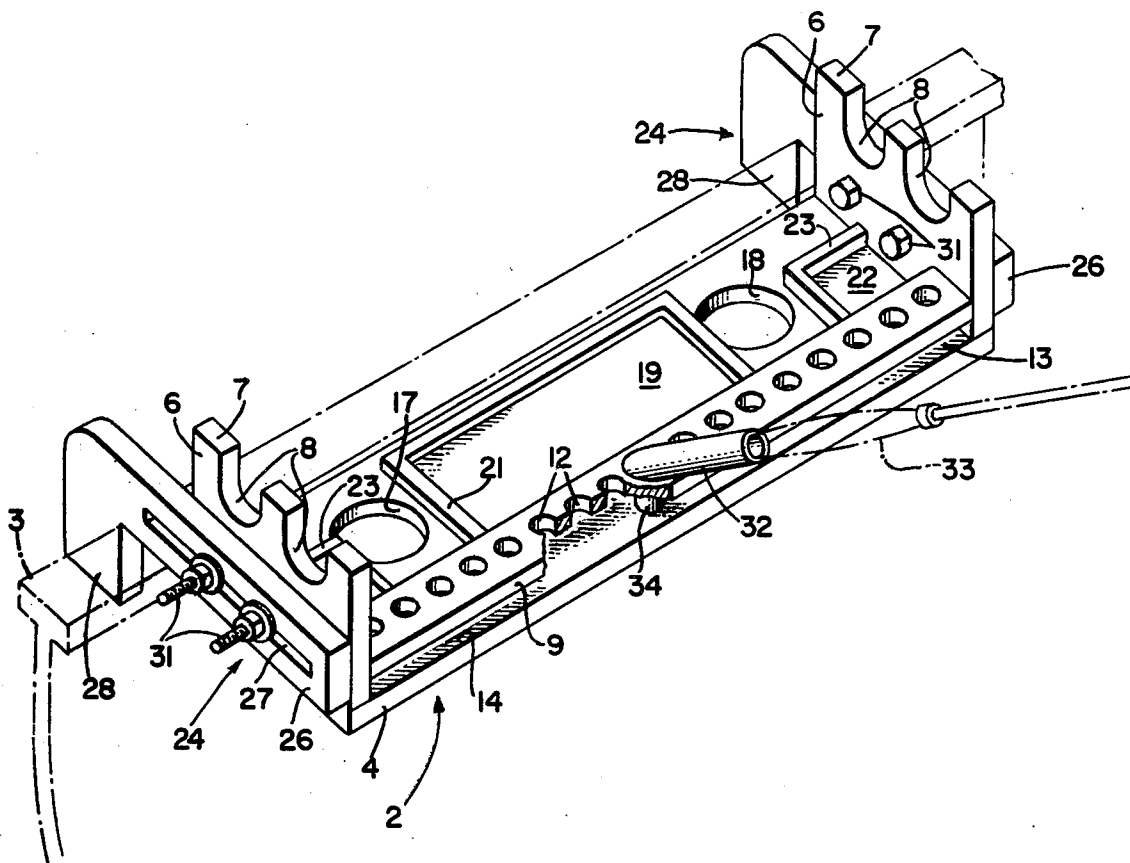
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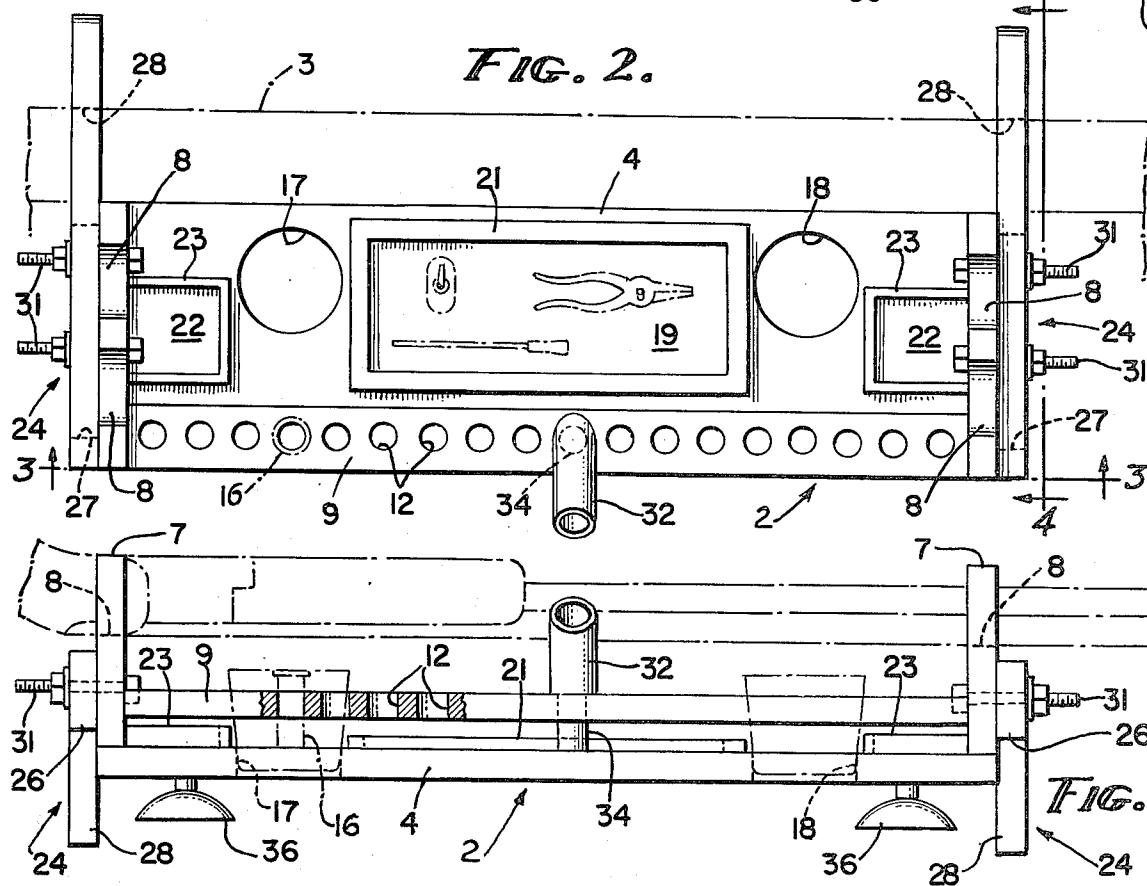
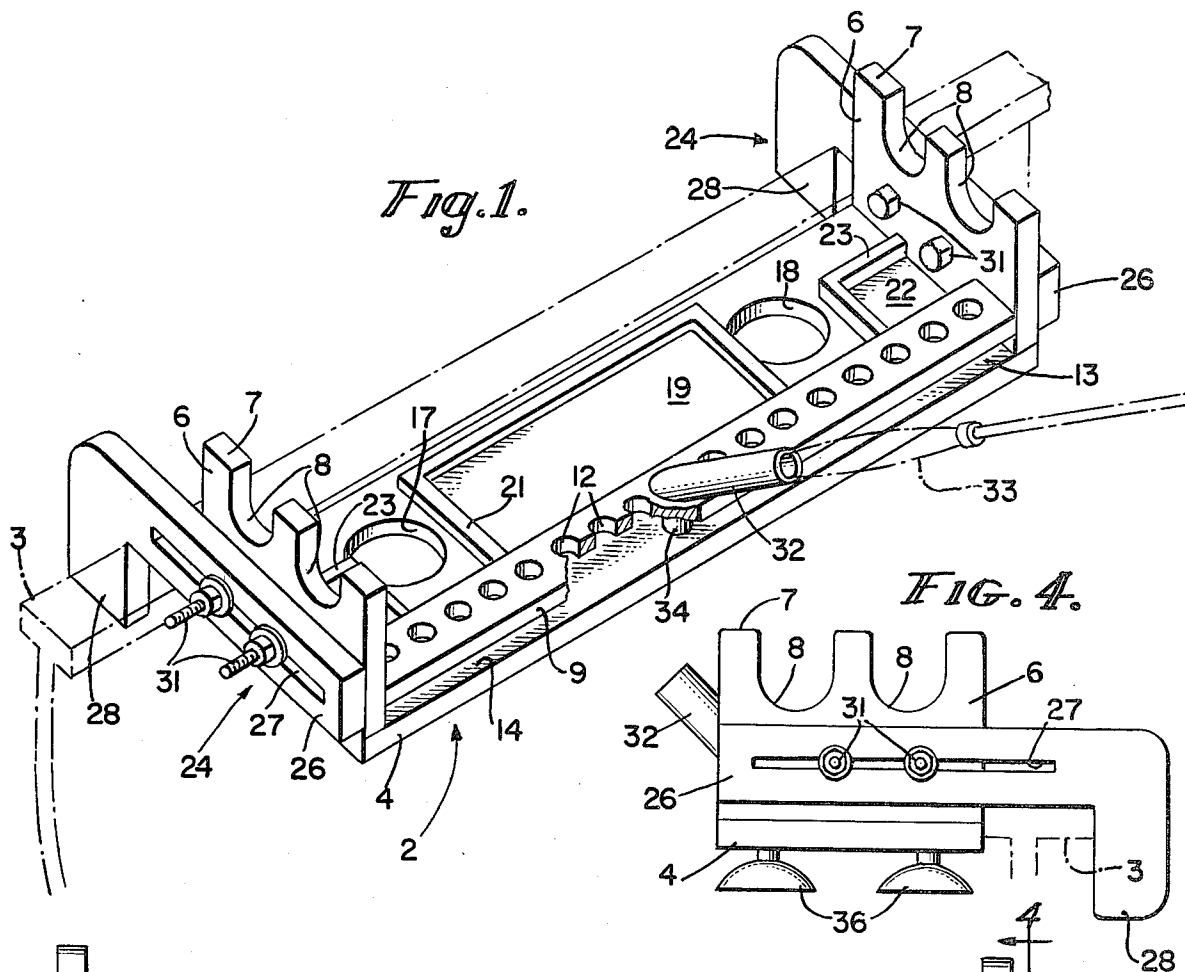
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ABSTRACT

Presented is a utility rack for use by boating enthusiasts, and particularly by hunters and fishermen for temporarily supporting shotguns in a position of disuse but of ready availability while in a boat.

5 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures





UTILITY GUN RACK FOR BOATS AND THE LIKE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Many hunters hunt ducks and geese from boats. In such environment, it is a problem to find a place to support the gun, even temporarily, while the boat is being rowed or "sculled" from one point to another. This is particularly true in sculling in which it is the hunter's object to sneak up undetected on a flock of ducks feeding in a pond. To do this, the boat is frequently camouflaged and the hunter lies prone in the boat, manipulating the boat from that position so as to slowly and quietly move up on the ducks resting on the water. It therefore becomes an advantage for the hunter to be able to support his loaded shotgun in a position where he will have ready access to it when he sits up to fire at the ducks. Accordingly, one of the objects of the present invention is to provide a gun rack for boats that presents a low profile and which is effective to support a loaded gun in a boat in position for quick and convenient use.

The duck hunting season in most areas is set to coincide with the migration of these fowl. This migration is caused by the change in seasons, and in most localities unfortunately, the weather during duck hunting season is extremely cold. Nevertheless, the avid duck hunter bundles himself up in thermal underwear, thermal outerwear, mittens and caps and sets forth in his boat to secure his limit of ducks. Burdened by so many clothes, it is an advantage if the shotgun and shells for the shotgun are readily accessible to the hunter without the necessity of laying the gun down in the bottom of the boat, in which position it might accidentally discharge and either kill someone or blow the bottom out of the boat. Accordingly, it is one of the objects of the present invention to provide a gun rack for boats which not only supports one or more shotguns thereon, but which provides means for supporting a large number of shotgun shells so that the hunter has ready access to the shells when he starts shooting.

It has been found that when hunters are out in a boat, they frequently have need for hand tools such as an adjustable wrench, a pair of pliers, cigarettes, cigarette lighter and fluid for their cigarette lighter. Accordingly, it is another object of the invention to provide a gun rack that accommodates all of these miscellaneous tools and items that add to the enjoyment of the hunter's hunting trip.

Because weather during duck season is generally cold, another indispensable item which is insisted upon by most duck hunters is a thermos of coffee or other hot beverage. The problem is that once served, in most conventional boats, there is no place to support the cup. Accordingly, it is another object of the invention to provide a gun rack which will not only support a gun and a large amount of ammunition for ready accessibility, but which also provide means for retaining a container of hot or cold liquid.

The invention possesses other objects and features of advantage, some of which, with the foregoing, will be apparent from the following description and the drawings. It is to be understood however that the invention is not limited to the embodiment illustrated and described, since it may be embodied in various forms within the scope of the appended claims.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In terms of broad inclusion, the utility rack of the invention comprises an elongated base member having upright ends slotted to receive one or more shotguns lying in a horizontal position. Adjustably mounted on each end is a clamp arm adapted to hook over the rail of a boat. A cartridge shelf is mounted above the base member, and means are provided in association with the cartridge shelf constituting a socket into which the butt end of a fishing pole may be inserted. Holders are also provided on the base member for miscellaneous tools, and apertures are provided in the base member to receive containers of hot or cold beverages.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view illustrating the utility gun rack mounted on the rail of a boat, which is shown in broken lines.

FIG. 2 is a plan view of the utility gun rack.

FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of the utility gun rack taken in the plane indicated by the line 3—3 in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is an end elevational view of the utility gun rack, taken in the plane indicated by the line 4—4 in FIG. 2.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

In terms of greater detail, the utility rack of the invention is designated generally by the numeral 2, and is adapted to be detachably clamped onto the rail 3 of a boat. Structurally, the utility rack comprises a plate-like base member 4, conveniently fabricated from a length of suitable lumber or other material, say 2 feet long and 8 inches wide. At each end, the base member is provided with an upwardly extending end plate 6 suitably secured to the end portion of the underlying plate by suitable screws (not shown) passing upwardly through the plate. If additional reinforcement is needed, the end plates 6 may be suitably secured to the support plate through use of an appropriate adhesive.

Formed in the top edge 7 of each of the end plates is a pair of notches 8, spaced apart and having a depth suitable to receive therein a shotgun cradled between the two end plates in corresponding notches. If desired, each of the notches may be lined with felt or other soft material, such as a layer of polyurethane foam (not shown), to cushion the rifle or shotgun as it lies cradled in the rack.

It is an advantage in hunting ducks or other type fowl over water that the cartridges to be used be readily available so that the gun may be quickly re-loaded after being fired. To provide such facility, there is provided disposed between the end plates 6 and adjacent one long edge of the base member 4, an elongated bar 9 having a multiplicity of apertures 12 formed therein in a row. The bar 9 is anchored at each end to the associated end plates 6 in any suitable manner, and is elevated above the base plate 4 to provide a space 13 between the underside of the bar 9 and the top surface 14 of the base plate. The diameter of the apertures formed in the bar are proportioned to snugly receive the outer periphery of a cartridge 16 in the manner illustrated in broken lines in FIG. 3.

As indicated, since duck hunting is normally enjoyed in the early morning hours when it is cold and frequently wet, it is an advantage to be able to partake of

a hot beverage such as coffee or chocolate while waiting for the ducks to arrive overhead. To this end, there is formed in the base plate 4 two apertures 17 and 18, each having a diameter sufficient to receive therewithin the outer periphery of a cup within which may be served a hot beverage. As seen in FIG. 3, the height of the shotguns when nestled in the notches 8 formed in the end plates is such that the gun need not be disturbed when moving the cup from the aperture. Additionally, the depth of the notches is such as to retain the gun without danger of its being inadvertently dislodged.

To accommodate the other miscellaneous tools that are frequently useful when hunting, such as pliers, screwdrivers, cigarettes and cigarette lighters, the top surface 14 of the base plate 4 is provided with a large centrally disposed receptacle 19 disposed to one side of the bar 9 so that access may be had to the receptacle, the receptacle being formed by appropriate rail members 21 arranged in a rectangular pattern on the top surface 14 of the base plate. Two additional receptacles 22 are formed adjacent the end plates 6 by rail members 23 also secured to the top surface 14 of the base plate.

The rack so formed, is provided at each end with a clamp member designated generally by the numeral 24, and at each end comprising a rail member 26 having an elongated slot 27 therein, one end of the rail being provided with a downwardly extending flange 28 adapted to lock behind the rail 3 of the boat that is interposed between the flange and the associated longitudinal edge 29 of the base plate. The clamp rail 26 is adjustably secured to the associated end plate 6 by a pair of bolts 31 which extend through appropriate apertures in the associated end plate and engage the elongated slot 27. All that is required to mount the utility rack to the rail of a boat, for instance, is that the bolts be loosened sufficiently to move the clamp rail 26 at each end relative to the associated edge 29 of the base plate so that the flange 28 may be clamped over the associated boat rail. The bolts are then tightened to lock the utility rack securely to the boat rail.

Since a great deal of time is frequently spent merely waiting for the ducks to fly over, it is an advantage if the utility rack is provided with means by which a fishing pole may be supported thereon in a manner that will not require the constant attention of the hunter. To this end, there is provided in conjunction with the utility rack, a socket 32 comprising an elongated hollow member into which the butt end of a fishing pole 33 may be inserted. The socket member 32 is pivotally mounted on a stub shaft 34 the diameter of which is proportioned to be snugly received within one of the apertures 12. Thus, as shown in FIG. 1, the socket may be placed in any one of the apertures and pivoted to the left or to the right to accommodate the whims of the hunterturned-fisherman. The socket may be easily lifted from the aperture for storage or for insertion of a cartridge in the particular aperture in which the fishing rod socket was initially mounted.

In recent years, much legislation has been passed relating to the control of guns. Of particular importance

with respect to the subject invention is the fact that in many states a hunter is prohibited from carrying a loaded shotgun within the cab of a pickup truck, for instance, or within an automobile. Nevertheless, when hunting for wild fowl, it frequently happens that game birds are seen while driving down the highway. It would be an advantage therefore to be able to carry a loaded gun while eliminating the possibility of injury through inadvertent discharge of the gun. Thus, to adapt the utility rack of the instant invention to being supported within the box of a pickup truck, for instance, there is provided to the underside of the base plate 4, a plurality of suction members 36 which become operative when the clamp rail 26 is removed from each end. With the clamp rails removed, the utility gun rack may be securely fastened to the bed of the truck so as to contain the guns, even in loaded condition, outside the cab of the pickup truck and readily accessible to the hunter if he happens to see game birds while traveling down the highway. To further insure against inadvertent dislodgement of the gun or guns while contained within the rack, an elastic strap 37 may be attached by one end to one longitudinal edge of the base plate and stretched over the guns and hooked to the base plate adjacent the opposite long edge of the base plate. Such a hold-down strap may be quickly and easily released when it is desired to lift one of the guns from the rack.

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed to be novel and sought to be protected by letters patent is as follows:

1. A utility gun rack adapted to be mounted on the rail of a boat, comprising:
 - a. an elongated plate-like base member;
 - b. end plates mounted adjacent opposite ends of the base member and projecting in a direction away from the rail on which the rack is mounted and having notches within and between which a gun may be cradled;
 - c. clamp means mounted adjacent each end of the base member and operatively adjustable to secure the utility gun rack to a boat rail on one side of the boat; and
 - d. means disposed above said base member a predetermined distance less than the length of a cartridge and adapted to hold a multiplicity of cartridges in a position for ready accessibility.
2. The combination according to claim 1, in which said clamp means is adjustable so as to securely clamp the boat rail between the clamp means and said base member.
3. The combination according to claim 1, in which socket means are provided on said means for holding cartridges and constituting a holder for a fishing pole.
4. The combination according to claim 1, in which aperture means are provided in said base member adapted to receive a beverage container.
5. The combination according to claim 1, in which compartment means are provided on said base member for receiving miscellaneous tools useful to the hunter while confined in a boat.

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