United States Patent

Tholen

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[45] **Nov. 21, 1972**

[54] CONVERTIBLE TENT AND LUGGAGE CONTAINER

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** .....**135/1 A,** 135/3 A
[51] **Int. Cl.** **A45f 1/00**
[58] **Field of Search** .....135/1 R, 1 A, 3 A, 4 R, 4 A, 135/5 A

[56] **References Cited**

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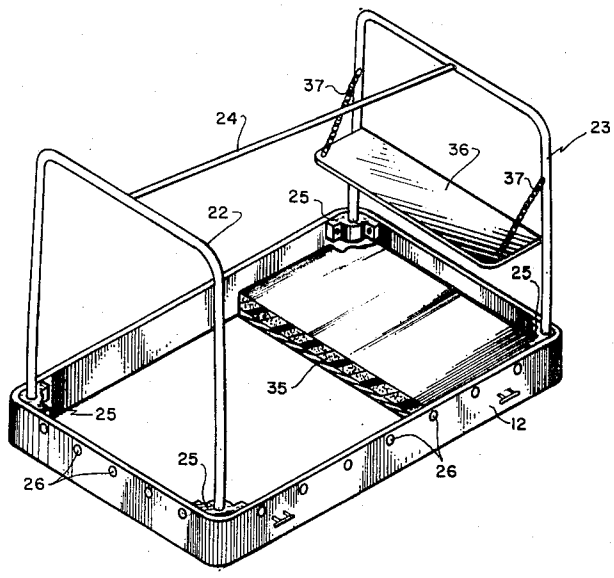
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Attorney—Frank E. Wattles

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A device which can be fixed to the luggage rack of a vehicle to store and transport items and can be removed from the luggage rack and used as a sleeping enclosure. The device consists of two open rectangular boxes which can be clamped together with their open ends mating to form the luggage container or separated so that each box can be used to form a sleeping enclosure. A mattress may be fitted inside each box. Detachable supporting frames may be mounted on each box to support a tent cover. Nesting blocks of various sizes may be used to level the box on irregular or inclined terrain. The mattresses, frames, tent cover and nesting blocks can be stored in the luggage container.

3 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures



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SHEET 1 OF 2

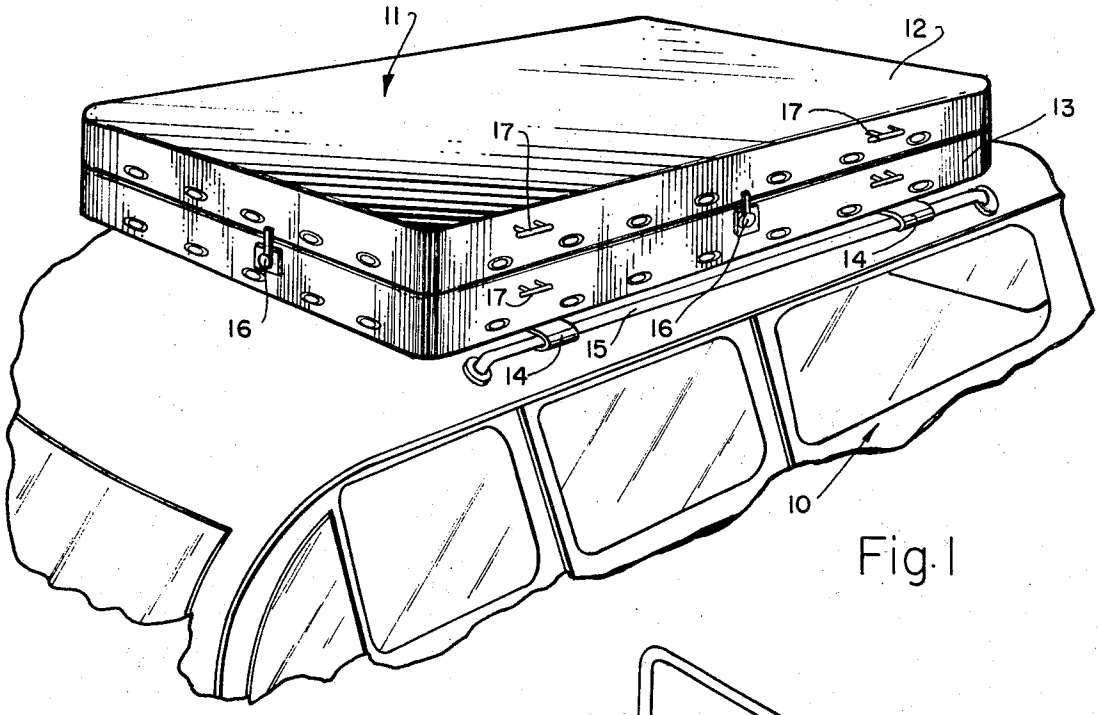


Fig. 1

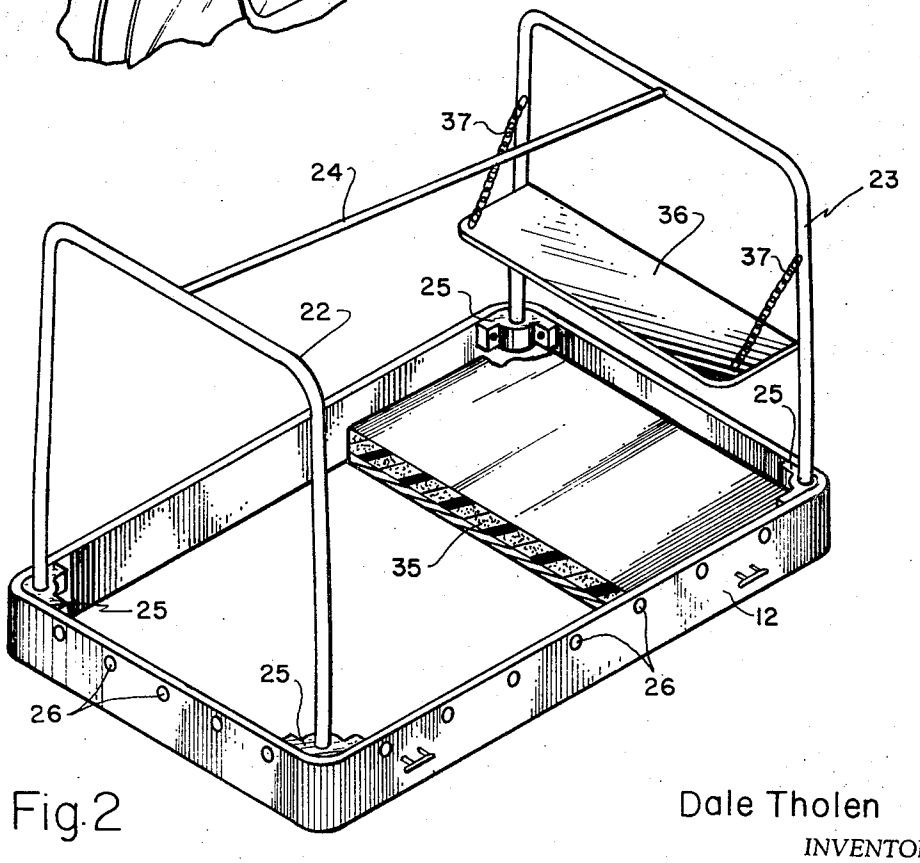


Fig. 2

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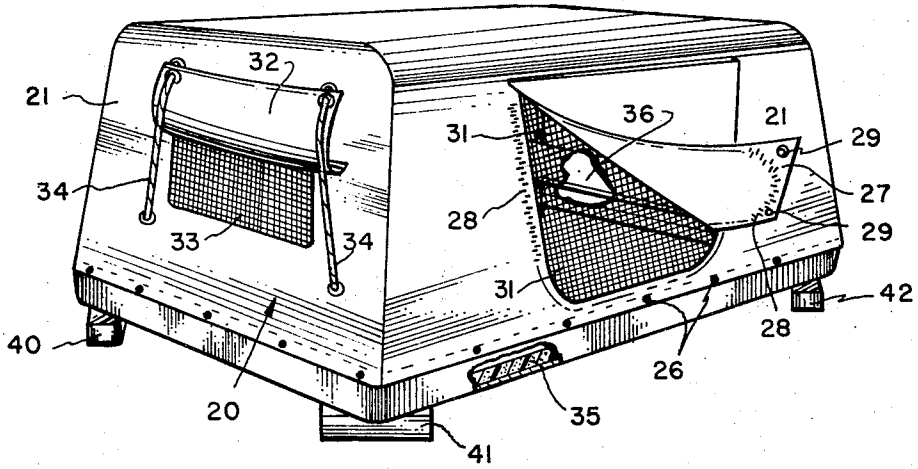


Fig. 3

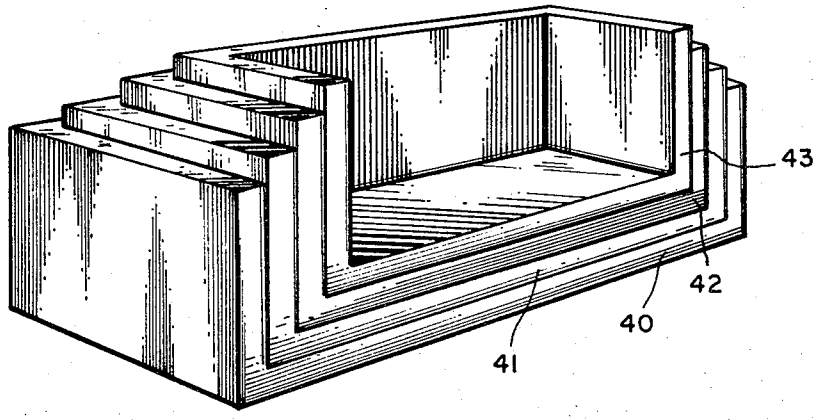


Fig. 4

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CONVERTIBLE TENT AND LUGGAGE CONTAINER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This device relates to a storage device which can be transported on vehicles and which are convertible into sleeping enclosures.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Devices which store items while they are being transported are normally of no use when the items have reached their destination, and by the same token, devices which are used as sleeping enclosures are of no use while in the course of traveling. While traveling in a vehicle such as an automobile, the space which can be allotted to storage of items is often at a premium. Commonly, a luggage container is used for storage and the container is placed inside the vehicle or is fastened to the top of the vehicle. Often, equipment for camping, such as tents, must be carried also, and such equipment must compete for storage space just when it is at a premium. In the present invention, the luggage container doubles as the sleeping enclosure, eliminating the requirement of carrying along separate container and enclosure. Hence, the present invention provides a method for more efficient utilization of space at a time when it is needed most.

One disadvantage of camping while on a car trip is that the sleeping accommodations out-of-doors are dissimilar to a bed in one's house, and as such, uncomfortable. Bed rolls are not sufficiently cushioned. Air mattresses do not give enough support and must be inflated and made up upon each use. This invention provides a sleeping enclosure identical to a stationary bed. Comfort is provided by the cushion mattress which is compactly carried during storage. Convenience is provided because no modification is required prior to use other than placement.

Some conventional convertible luggage containers form a trunk fastened to a car. Sections of containers are hinged to fold out into a sleeping enclosure still fastened to the car and designed to use the car for support. Frequently the car requires modification to accommodate the luggage container. These devices are expensive and require sleeping use in the vicinity of the car. The present invention provides an unhinged container which is portable and divides into two separate sleeping enclosures which can be located at remote locations from the car and each other. No modification of the car is required. By providing two separate enclosures the invention provides unique flexibility. One section can be removed to serve as a sleeping enclosure while the other section remains on the car for storage. None of the stored items needs to be removed from the container in order to provide one sleeping enclosure.

The present invention provides a compactness and simplicity of design not found in the prior art. The components are easy to construct and can be relatively light weight for removal from the car by only one or two persons. A tent cover and removable support arms are stored in the container and mount upon the sleeping enclosure. Other features are provided and are hereinafter described.

Conventional devices and disadvantages described above are illustrated by the following U.S. Pats.:

No. 2,071,644; Combination Trunk, Bed, and Tent — 190/12

No. 3,341,096; Combination Car Top Carrier - Play Pen — 224/42.01

No. 3,539,219; Vehicle Top Recreation Package — 296/23

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly, this invention provides a container mountable to a luggage rack of a vehicle for storage of articles in a transport mode. In a non-transport mode the container divides into two sleeping beds. The container comprises first and second sections each in the form of a shallow rectangular box having an open top face. A plurality of tent support frames are erectable over the open top face of each of the first and second sections. A tent is mountable on the support frames of each of the first and second sections to provide two separate enclosed sleeping beds. Means are provided to fasten each tent to the first and second section, respectively. Means lock together the first and second sections with their open top faces coinciding to form a closed container for the transport mode and means fixedly mount the container to a vehicle luggage rack.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of the invention used as a luggage container, where the container is shown mounted on top of a vehicle.

FIG. **2** is a perspective view of the invention used as a sleeping enclosure, with the tent cover removed for clarity.

FIG. **3** is a perspective view of the invention used as a sleeping enclosure with a tent cover in place.

FIG. **4** is a perspective view of the nesting blocks stacked for storage.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to the drawings, FIG. **1** shows the invention mounted on a vehicle **10** in the transport mode. The invention is the luggage container **11** which comprises a first section **12** and a second section **13**. Fittings **14** are connected to section **13** and fasten to vehicle luggage rack **15** to provide a means for fixedly mounting the container to the rack. Means to lock together sections **12** and **13** are provided by locks **16**. The number of fittings and locks and the form of them are matters of obvious design. The representation of the drawing is not intended to limit the fittings and locks to those shown. Any conventional fittings and locks are a part of this invention. To facilitate placing and removing the container from the rack, handles **17** may be attached to sections **12, 13**.

Sections **12, 13** each form a shallow rectangular box as illustrated for one section in FIG. **2**. The section should be constructed of waterproof, lightweight material which is sufficiently rigid to maintain its shape under the weight of a human being. The shallow box can be used as a sleeping bed which can easily be set up and which will protect the sleeper from ground waters. To protect the sleeper from rain and other elements a tent **20** (FIG. **3**) can be erected over the box. Tent **20** comprises a tent cover **21** and a plurality of tent support frames illustrated by arch-shaped bows **22** and **23** and spreader bar **24**. The ends of bows **22, 23** are mounted over the box by inserting the ends of the bows

in holes 25. Further support is given by connecting spreader bar 24 between the upper ends of bows 22, 23. Tent cover 21 is shaped to fit over the support frames and means for fastening the tent cover to the box are provided as illustrated by snaps 26. The tent 20 forms a secure enclosure. A door is formed by flap 27 in tent cover 21. The flap can have a zipper 28 and/or snaps 29 to secure it. Additional mosquito netting 31 can be placed at the door as a curtain. Additional window flaps 32 can be formed in tent cover with mosquito netting 33 and securing means such as a tie down rope 34. For comfort to produce a sleeping bed similar to an indoors bed, a thin foam rubber mattress 35 may cover the floor of the box. A part of the mattress 35 is shown in FIG. 2. The mattress should be secured to the bottom of the box so that it will not fall out as the box is moved. When the sections are locked together in a transport mode, the mattresses will deform to the shape of articles stored in the container 11 and will provide cushion protection. A fold-down shelf 36 can be hung from a bow on links 37 for temporary storage of articles while in a non-transport mode. The sleeping enclosure described for one section 12 is equally applicable to the other section 13 such that two sleeping enclosures can be produced from container 11. It is apparent that according to the described invention, a tent need not be formed specifically as shown but can include other modifications, as for example by hanging the tent cover from the support frames rather than fitting the tent cover over the frames.

FIG. 4 illustrates means for leveling a section on ground which is not level in the form of nesting blocks 40, 41, 42, 43. The blocks are sized so a smaller block fits within a larger block so all blocks can be compactly stored. In leveling a section, the blocks are located under the section as illustrated in FIG. 3, and adjusted in position until the section is suitably level. Any other conventional leveling means may be employed in lieu of the nesting blocks.

When the container 11 is in a transport mode the tent cover 21, bows 22, 23, spreader 24, mattress 35, shelf 36 and nesting blocks 40—43 can be conveniently collapsed or separated and stored in the container. Of course, there will be two of each item listed because of the two sections with accompanying tents.

I claim:

1. A container mountable to the luggage rack of a vehicle for storage of articles in a transport mode and providing two sleeping beds in a non-transport mode, said container comprising:

a first section forming a shallow rectangular box having an open top face;

a plurality of first tent support frames erectable over the open top face of the first section;

a first tent mountable on the first support frames and fastenable to the first section;

a second section forming a shallow rectangular box having an open top face;

a plurality of second tent support frames erectable over the open top face of the second section;

a second separate tent mountable on the second support frames and fastenable to the second section;

means for locking together the first and second sections with open top faces coinciding to form a closed container;

means for fixedly mounting the container to a vehicle luggage rack;

means to fasten the first tent to the first section; and

means to fasten the second tent to the second section.

2. A container as recited in claim 1 and further comprising a first foam rubber mattress located within the first section and a second foam rubber mattress located within the second section.

3. A container as recited in claim 2 and further comprising a first means for ground leveling the first section and a second means for ground leveling the second section.

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