Oct. 1, 1940. L. F. SINSABAUGH 2,216,576

MAILBOX PROTECTOR

Filed Feb. 7, 1939

Fig. 1

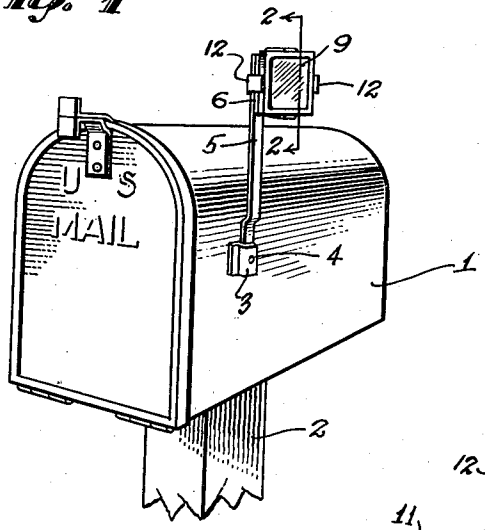


Fig. 2

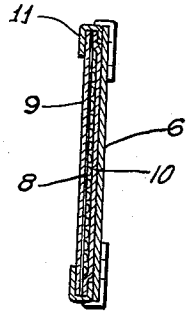


Fig. 3

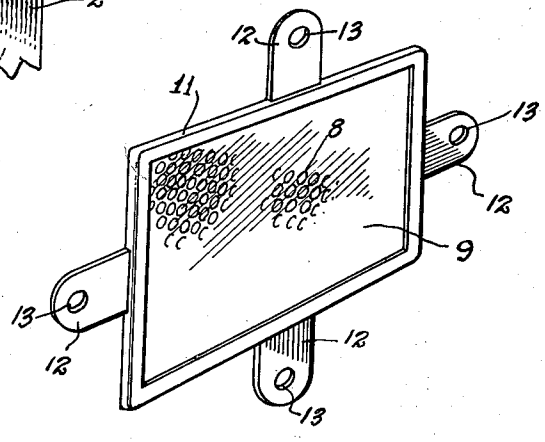


Fig. 4

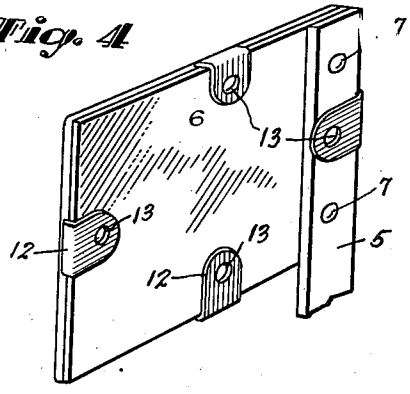
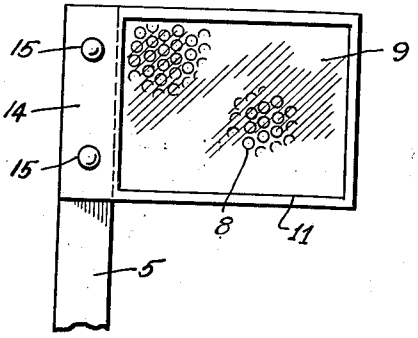


Fig. 5



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MAILBOX PROTECTOR

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2 Claims. (Cl. 88—78)

This invention is a mailbox protector adapted more particularly for the protection of rural delivery mailboxes. These boxes are usually set up on posts along highways and are generally located relatively close to the road, so that the postman may conveniently deposit mail therein. Their location is such that if vehicles run too close, the boxes are apt to be struck and damaged. The difficulty is that persons driving along dark highways do not see the boxes and the object of the present invention is to provide means whereby their presence may be made apparent to the drivers of cars on the highways.

Rural delivery mailboxes are equipped with a pivoted staff having a metal flag adapted to be moved from one position to another in order to indicate whether or not there is any mail in the box. This flag is so positioned as to be visible at all times by cars passing along the road. I have found it highly practical, economical and efficient to mount or support on this flag light reflecting means, preferably colored red, and so constituted that, when illuminated by the head lights of a car, said reflector will sparkle and brilliantly shine, so as to attract the driver's attention. Experience of the postal department has shown that great numbers of these boxes are annually destroyed and damaged through collision as stated and that the majority of such collisions occur between the hours of 6 p. m. and 3 a. m. when automobile drivers cannot see the boxes because of darkness. By protecting boxes, according to this invention, drivers will be able to readily see them along the side of the road and accidents of this kind, resulting from inadequate visibility, may be thus avoided.

The light reflecting means may be associated with the flag in various ways. It may be built as an integral part thereof or made readily attachable to the flag, but in any event, it will be visible in fog and in the night-time, irrespective of the position of the flag.

Features of the invention, other than those adverted to, will be apparent from the hereinafter detailed description and claims, when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawing.

The accompanying drawing illustrates different practical embodiments of the invention, but the constructions therein shown are to be understood as illustrative, only, and not as defining the limits of the invention.

Figure 1 is a perspective view showing a rural mailbox embodying the present invention.

Figure 2 is a section on the line 2—2 of Figure 1.

Figure 3 shows the preferred form of the device prior to its attachment to the flag.

Figure 4 shows the flag detached from the box and viewed from its rear to illustrate how the reflector is attached to the forward face of the flag.

Figure 5 shows a modified form of construction wherein the reflector element constitutes the flag and is supported directly on the pivoted staff.

Referring to the drawing, 1 designates a conventional rural mailbox, shown as supported on a post 2 as is commonly the case. The box 1 is provided on its side with a fixture 3 embodying a pivot 4 on which is supported the staff 5 of the signal flag 6. The flag is usually in the form of a metal plate which is riveted or spot welded to the staff 5, as indicated at 7 in Figure 4, and the opposite faces of said flag are commonly painted red so as to be readily visible in the daytime.

In associating the present invention with this box construction, I preferably make the light reflecting means as shown in Figures 2 and 3. That is to say, I provide a reflecting element 8, preferably in the form of a sheet of any suitable metal, which is embossed, striated, stippled or otherwise constituted to have an uneven surface which, in practice, may have the appearance of being diamond studded. This effect can be produced by pressing or otherwise forming the material between dies or rolls of a configuration to manipulate or bend the metal into the desired surface configuration, so that when light impinges upon this metal it will encounter a large number of facets and cause a sparking or glittering effect. Zinc and other soft malleable metals, such as are commonly used for the manufacture of reflecting surfaces, may, to advantage, be employed in this connection. The face of the reflecting means may be polished, nickel or chrome plated, so that it will shine more brilliantly.

A rectangular piece of this material about the size of the flag is placed between a metal backing plate 10 and a sheet 9 of glass, transparent cellulosic material, isinglass or any other suitable transparent material of about the same size as the reflecting element and these three parts are bound together by a metal binding 11 which is bent over the margins of the parts 8, 9 and 10 to clamp them tightly together and form a unitary structure. The backing 10 is provided at each of its four sides with a projecting ear 12, preferably perforated as at 13, and are of such malleable

character that when the assembled reflector element is positioned in face abutting relation with the flag, the ears **12** may be bent over the four edges of the flag as shown in Figures 1, 2 and 4 to securely mount this reflecting unit on the flag. The unit should be mounted on the side of the flag which will be visible to persons approaching the box along the right side of the road and the transparent material, forming part of said reflector element, is preferably colored red although any other suitable color may be employed if so desired. As a result of this assembly, cars approaching the box in the night or in fog will cause the reflector to be illuminated and brilliantly shine and sparkle, and this being apparent to the driver, a great majority of the accidents which commonly occur through poor visibility will be avoided.

In Figure 5 I have shown a modified form of the invention. Here the ears **12** are omitted and the unit is enlarged at one end as indicated at **14**, so that rivets **15** may be passed directly through perforations in the device and through the staff **5** of the flag to mount the reflecting means directly on the staff, although spot welding may, if desired, be used for this purpose. This makes it unnecessary to use a separate flag plate **6** if the light reflecting means is to be incorporated in the flag construction at the time of manufacture of the box.

The present invention is relatively simple in construction, may be economically manufactured and does not materially add to the cost of the box when incorporated therein at the time of manufacture. When subsequently associated therewith, as by securing the same to the flag by bending over the ears **12**, as shown in the drawing, the cost of such device is inconsequential.

The use of this invention on rural mail boxes will save large amounts of money which is annually expended in the maintenance and repair of such boxes, to say nothing of damage which results to automobile owners and injury to the occupants of cars who are unfortunate enough to be involved in accidents with these boxes.

This mailbox protector is an advantage to the postal service because it can more readily be seen by the carrier, when approaching a mailbox, than the present metal flag, which is difficult to see when the red paint is worn off.

The foregoing detailed description sets forth the invention in its preferred practical forms, but the invention is to be understood as fully commensurate with the appended claims.

Having thus fully described the invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. As a new article of manufacture, a device of the character described comprising a substantially rectangular back plate of approximately the same size and shape as the flag of a rural mailbox, a transparent front plate in front of said back plate and substantially coextensive therewith, a light reflecting means positioned between the back plate and said transparent front plate flanges at the edges of the back plate bent forwardly over the edges of the transparent front plate to hold the latter in position, and malleable bendable attachment tongues secured to the back plate and extending beyond the edges thereof and adapted to be bent backwardly over the corresponding edges of the flag to mount the device thereon.

2. As a new article of manufacture, a device of the character described comprising a substantially rectangular back plate of approximately the same size and shape as the flag of a rural mailbox, a transparent front plate in front of said back plate and substantially coextensive therewith, a light reflecting means positioned between the back plate and said transparent front plate flanges at the edges of the back plate bent forwardly over the edges of the transparent front plate to hold the latter in position, and malleable bendable attachment tongues secured to the back plate and extending beyond the edges thereof and adapted to be bent backwardly over the corresponding edges of the flag to mount the device thereon, each tongue having a perforation near its outer end.

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