

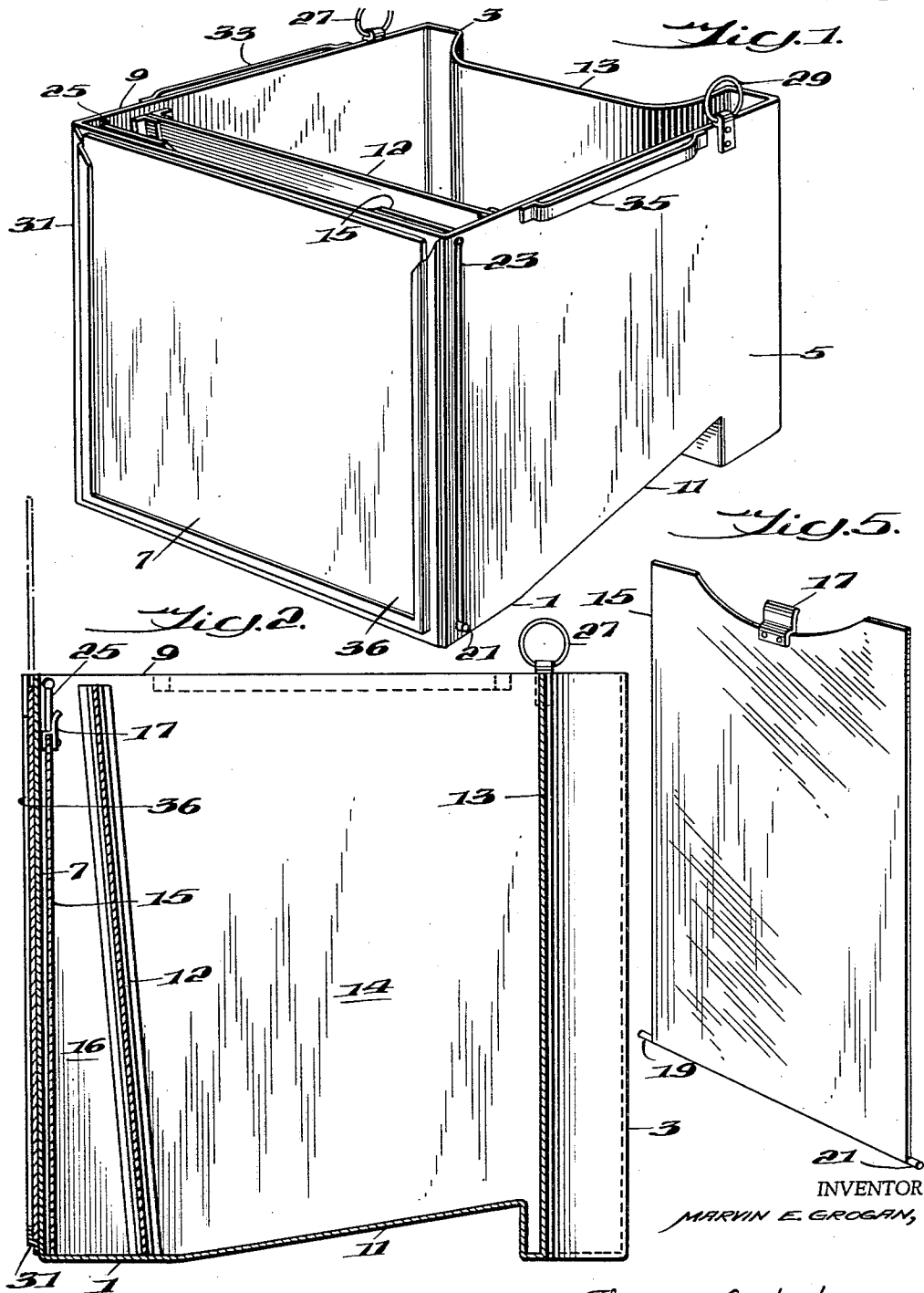
May 5, 1964

M. E. GROGAN
MAIL CONTAINER

3,131,841

Filed Sept. 12, 1962

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



BY *Thomas & Crickenberger*

ATTORNEYS

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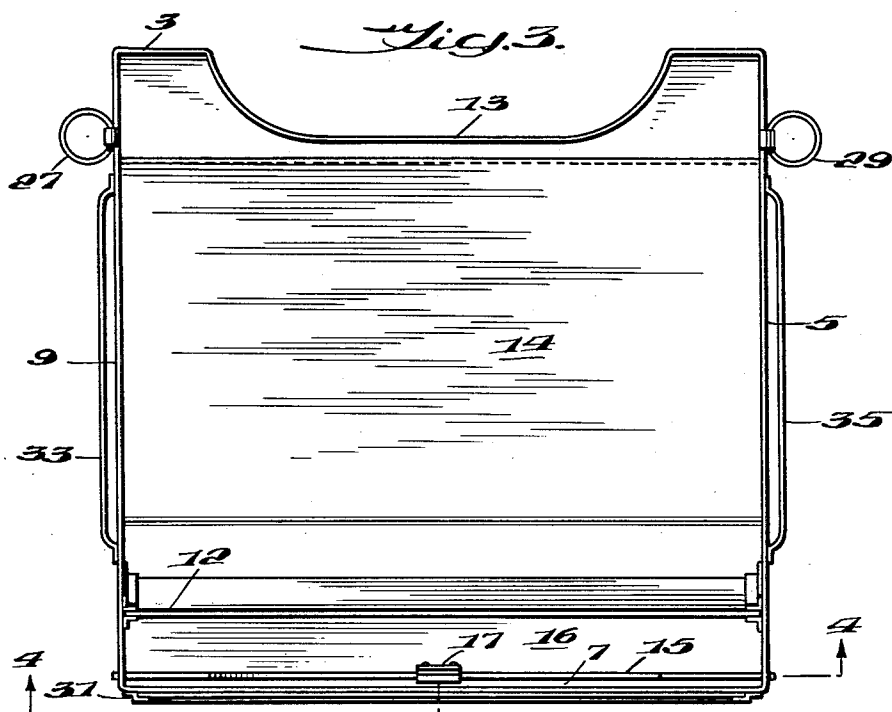
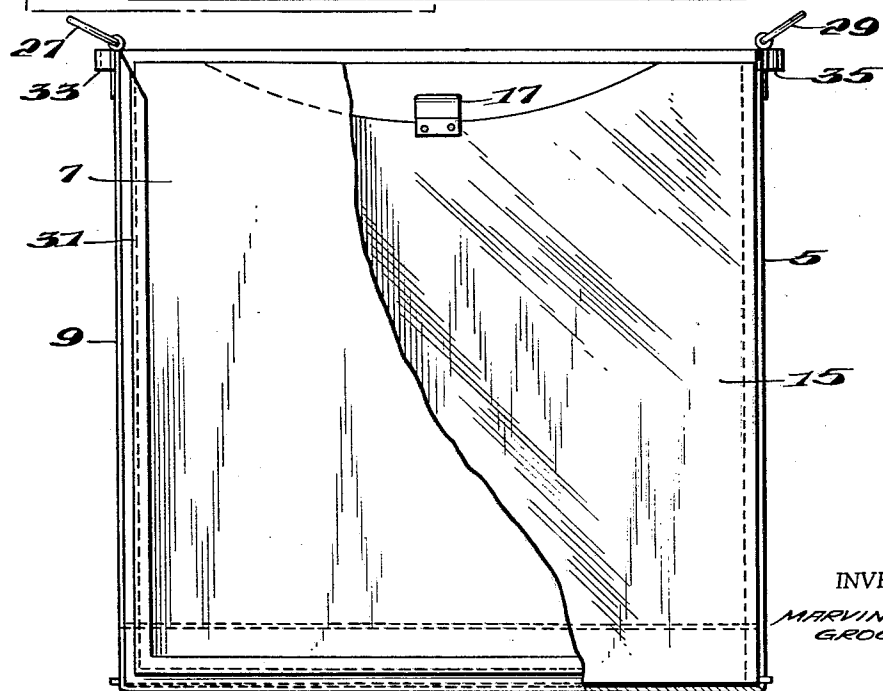
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3,131,841

MAIL CONTAINER

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This invention relates to a mail container for use by mail carriers in the door-to-door delivery of mail.

In the door-to-door delivery of mail it has been customary for mail carriers to employ leather bags in which to carry the mail to be delivered. A conventional leather mail bag weighs approximately 5 pounds when empty and dry, and this weight is increased to over six pounds when the bag becomes wet during a rainy day delivery. Since the mail bag, when fully packed, weighs on the order of thirty pounds, the weight of the bag alone constitutes a significant portion of the total load. It will be appreciated that it is in the interest of efficiency to keep down the "non-payload" weight with which the carrier is burdened, and for this reason a lightweight substitute for the present leather bags would be most desirable.

In order to facilitate the delivery of mail the mail carrier sorts the mail at the post office prior to delivery. The sorted mail for his entire route is usually too much for the mail carrier to put in the bag at one time, so the mail to be delivered is divided into portions which will fit within the bag. The mail carrier places the first portion of mail to be delivered in his bag, and the remaining portions are carried by a truck and deposited at predetermined locations along the carrier's route.

It is necessary to set the bag down while replacing portions of mail, and the collapsible nature of the leather bag often proves to be troublesome in causing the mail to become disarranged.

As the carrier walks along his route, it is important for him to be able to read the addresses on the mail in his bag, and at the same time to protect the mail from moisture in inclement weather. With the conventional leather bags in use at the present time, this is extremely difficult and the carrier usually resorts to carrying a portion of mail in his hand to avoid having to dig into the bag to read the addresses.

An additional disadvantage of the leather bag is the cost of maintenance. The problem of patching, adding new sections, and replacing rotten or frayed threads adds a significant cost to the initial purchase price of the bag itself. Also, the constant rubbing of the leather bag against the uniform of the carrier produces a large amount of friction which causes substantial wear of both the bag and the carrier's uniform.

Accordingly, it is a feature of this invention to provide an improved mail container of lightweight construction to replace the conventional leather mail bags currently in use.

Another feature of the invention is the provision of a mail container which keeps the mail in a predetermined order and provides means for enabling the carrier to view the pieces of mail sequentially in unobstructed fashion.

Another feature of the invention is the provision of a rigid mail container appropriately contoured to fit the body of the mail carrier, and being of non-absorbent material to prevent an increase in weight when wet.

A further feature of the invention is the provision of a mail container having a novel transparent lid which enables the carrier to view the contents of the closed mail container and which lid folds out of the way completely when desired.

A still further feature of the invention is the provision of a mail container which will wear indefinitely and is free from protruding buckles and flaps.

Another feature of the invention is the provision of a

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mail container having means to display posters and slogans as promotional material while the carrier is making his rounds.

The features of the invention are realized in a mail container rigidly constructed of a material such as aluminum. The container is formed with a bottom section, a portion of which is inclined to produce a container of varying depth. Four upstanding wall sections form the sides of the container, and one section is appropriately contoured inwardly to conform to the body configuration of a mail carrier. A transparent lid member is slidably journaled in opposite side walls to allow movement from a completely open to a completely closed position. The container is divided into larger and smaller compartments for holding mail to be delivered and collected mail, respectively. Means are provided to fasten a strap member to the container to support the container about a carrier's body. The side opposite the contoured side is provided with means for receiving and supporting display materials.

The foregoing and other features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following more particular description of a preferred embodiment of the invention, as illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a mail container construction in accordance with the principles of the invention;

FIG. 2 is a side elevation of the container of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a plan view of the container;

FIG. 4 is a rear elevation taken along line 4-4 of FIG. 3; and

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the transparent lid member.

The invention will be understood more readily by making reference to the drawings in which the same numerals are used on corresponding parts throughout the various figures.

The mail container of the present invention comprises a bottom section 1 having four upstanding wall sections 3, 5, 7 and 9 affixed thereto to form a hollow container member. The bottom section 1 has an inclined portion 11. A divider section 12 divides the interior of the container into a larger compartment 14 and a smaller compartment 16. The larger compartment 14 has a varying depth by reason of the inclined portion 11 of the bottom section 1. The wall section 3 has a contoured portion 13 projecting inwardly and designed to conform to the body shape of a mail carrier.

The container is provided with a lid member 15 having pins 19 and 21 slidably journaled in slots 23 and 25 of wall sections 5 and 9, respectively. This enables the lid 15 to be stored in an upright position, as shown in FIG. 2, when not in use. In this position the lid does not interfere with access to the interior of the container. The lid 15 is preferably made of a transparent plastic to enable the carrier to view the contents of the compartments while the lid is in position, thereby affording protection to the contents in inclement weather. Fingerlift member 17 enables easy manipulation of the lid from a position covering the container to the upright storage position.

Ring members 27 and 29 are provided on the wall sections 9 and 5, respectively, to serve as fastening elements for a strap member (not shown) adapted to be carried by the shoulder of the mail carrier as the container rests against the carrier's body along contoured portion 13. Strap hanger members 33 and 35 are also disposed on wall sections 9 and 5, respectively, to provide an easily accessible holder for the conventional leather straps used by mail carriers to hold together bundles of mail. As the carrier delivers the mail, he removes the leather strap holding together the bundle of mail being delivered, and

the leather strap is then fastened in position on hanger members 33 and 35 for safe keeping.

A support channel 31 is provided along the outer edge of wall section 7 to support a removable display member 36 which may be removed, discarded, and replaced by a new display member as desired. This is useful for the various slogans and notices promulgated by the post office department.

The mail container of the present invention is rigid in construction and retains its shape without collapsing when in service. The material used in construction for the container itself is preferably aluminum, although high impact plastics could be utilized. The structure is lightweight and non-absorbent, so that there is no increase in weight when the container is wet. The transparent protective lid stores out of the way, and enables the carrier to view the contents of the container while protecting the contents from inclement weather. The inclined bottom portion serves as an indexing means for the mail pieces, and enables the carrier to view readily the various addresses on magazines and other large pieces of mail. The container will wear indefinitely, and the initial cost is the only cost involved, since no upkeep is required.

While the invention has been shown and described with particular reference to a preferred embodiment, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A mail container for use by a mail carrier comprising a bottom section having an inclined portion, first, second, third and fourth wall sections joined to said bottom section to form a hollow receptacle of varying depth,

said first and third and said second and fourth wall sections being located in upstanding opposing relationship, said first wall section having an inwardly curved portion adapted to conform to the body configuration of a mail carrier, a pair of opposing support channels mounted on the inside surfaces of said second and fourth wall sections, a divider wall section mounted between said support channels to divide said container into first and second compartments, a lid member, means mounting said lid member in slidable relationship between said second and fourth wall sections, and means mounted on said second and fourth wall sections to attach a strap member to said container for suspending said container about the body of the mail carrier.

2. The combination according to claim 1 wherein said lid member is transparent.

3. The combination according to claim 1 wherein said bottom and wall sections are rigid.

4. The combination according to claim 3 wherein said bottom and wall sections are constructed of aluminum.

5. The combination according to claim 1 including means joined to said third wall section for receiving and supporting display materials.

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