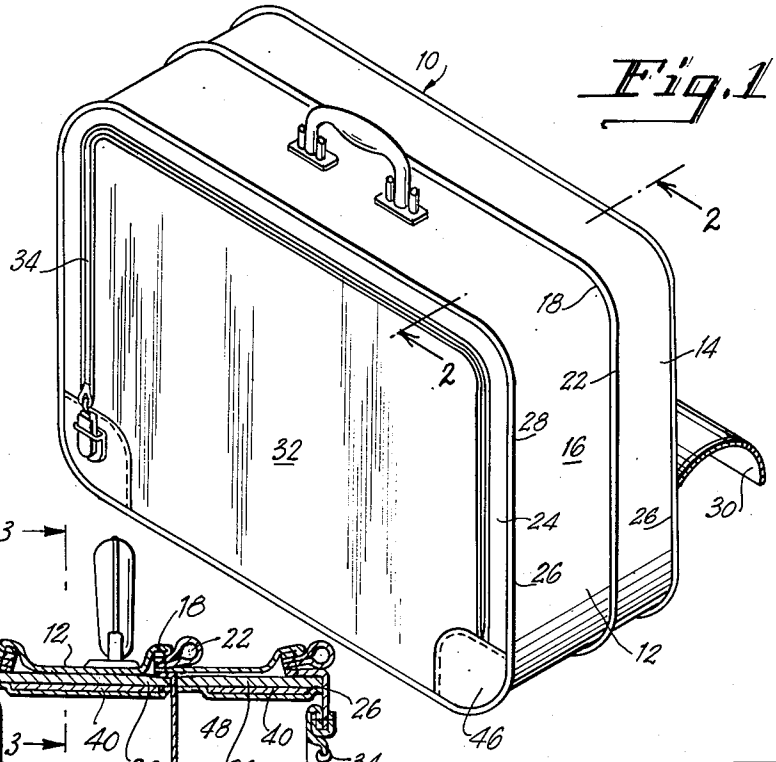
Dec. 13, 1960 H. SMALLBERG 2,964,149

ARTICLE OF LUGGAGE

Filed Sept. 18, 1959

Fig. 1



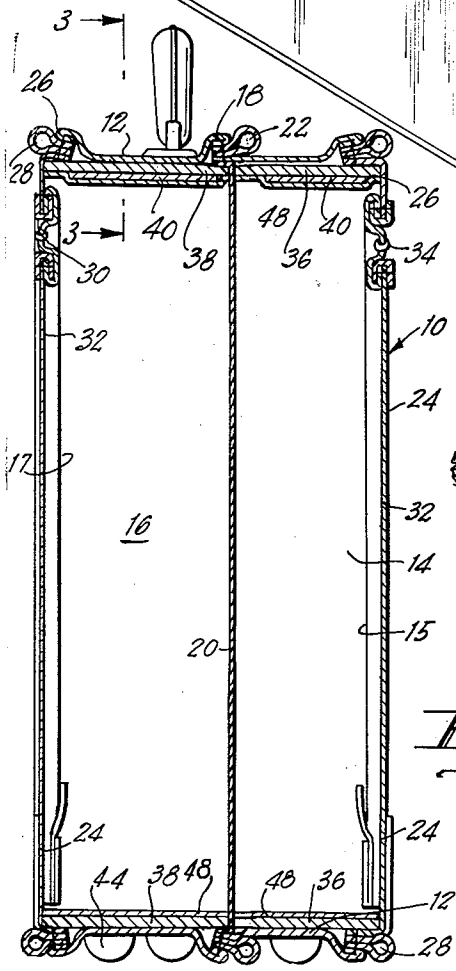
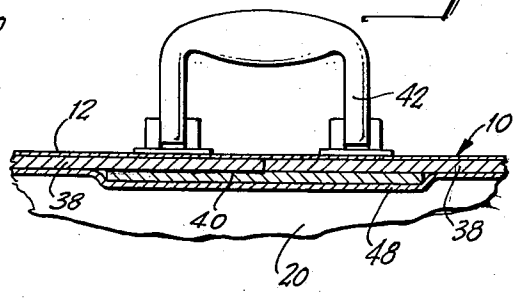


Fig. 2

Fig. 3



INVENTOR.
Harry Smallberg

BY

ATTORNEY

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ARTICLE OF LUGGAGE

Harry Smallberg, New York, N.Y.
(25 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, N.Y.)

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The present invention relates to an article of luggage, such as a suit case, or the like, and especially to such a luggage article which is partly soft-walled, of the type in which a periphery thereof is rigidified and the two complementary opposed walls are soft, and in which the opening is formed in a soft wall; and is particularly directed to such article of luggage which is divided into two back-to-back compartments.

Partly soft-walled luggage articles of the general character described above are formed by sewing an outer shell or cover of soft, pliable material, such as plastic or plastic coated or impregnated textile fabric, which consists of an annular section that defines a periphery of the luggage articles, to whose opposed edges are sewn panels defining the complementing opposed sides of the cover or shell. A tongue is cut out in one fabric panel to leave an opening for loading or packing; the tongue itself serving as a closure for such opening which is secured by its free edges to the edge of the opening by a slide fastener. A suitably rigid and curved frame, in the form of a strip of rigid material, as wood, of substantially the same dimensions as the annular shell section is inserted into the shell through the loading opening and is tensed against the annular section to provide a rigid periphery for the luggage article. The frame is held in place by the tension it exerts and is not otherwise secured to the shell.

In such partly soft-walled luggage having back-to-back compartments, such as to which the present invention relates, a partition divides the interior along the center of the annular section thereof and a loading opening is formed in each of the soft walls thereof. As heretofore particed, such partition was installed after the rigidifying frame was set into place. This made the operation laborious, time consuming and costly, because it required the installing of metal fittings to hold the partition in place which generally had to be secured both, to the frame and to the partition, and it also required the use of partitions of special characteristics of flexibility, to be insertable through the loading opening of the luggage case, and of body and strength to be securable to the fittings. Besides, adding to the cost of labor and materials, the metal fittings and the special partition added appreciably to the weight of the finished article, thereby detracting from one of its major advantages; namely, lightness of weight.

Also, cases with back to back compartments, such as described, generally required greater peripheral width and therefore a wider rigidifying frame. Such wider frame adds to the difficulty of inserting and tensing of the outer soft-walled shell and also adds disproportionately to the cost of the frame, as wider frames are costlier, area for area, than narrower frames.

It is the general object of the present invention to provide an article of luggage of partly soft-walled construction and having back-to-back compartments, of the character described, which obviates all of the foregoing difficulties and disadvantages in manufacture and

assembly. It is, thus, one object of the invention to provide a luggage article of the character described which has a partition dividing it into back-to-back compartments which is simply, easily and quickly secured in place, without the use of any metal fittings, to thereby make its production and assembly simpler, easier, more rapid and less costly.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an article of luggage of the character described having a partition of less costly and lighter-weight material than heretofore used.

It is also an object of the present invention to provide an article of luggage of the character described which utilizes a rigidifying frame that is less costly than one used in a non-compartmented luggage article of similar dimensions.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a partly soft-walled article of luggage of the character described which is of no appreciably greater weight than non-compartmented luggage articles of similar dimensions.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide a partly soft-walled article of luggage having back-to-back compartments of the character described which is strong, sturdy and durable, and easy and convenient to handle and use.

The foregoing and other objects and advantages of the luggage articles of the present invention will become readily apparent to those skilled in the art from the embodiment thereof shown in the accompanying drawing and from the description following. It is to be understood, however, that such embodiment is shown by way of illustration only, to make the principles and practice of the invention more readily comprehensible, and without any intent of limiting the invention to the specific details therein shown.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of an article of luggage having back-to-back compartments, embodying the invention;

Fig. 2 is a section taken on line 2—2 of Fig. 1; and

Fig. 3 is a section taken on line 3—3 of Fig. 2.

Generally stated, the present invention resides in forming the partition dividing the luggage article into back to back compartments of a textile fabric or similar material capable of being sewn, and securing such partition directly to the annular wall section of the housing or shell, intermediate its open ends, before insertion of the rigidifying frame thereinto and of forming such frame in two annular parts or sections, each inserted into one of the compartments, to one side of the partition. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the annular peripheral wall section of the shell is also formed of two annular strips of fabric that are sewn together edge to edge, with the edge of the partition secured between them, by the same seam that joins such strips to one another.

Referring in detail to the accompanying illustrative drawing, the same shows an article of luggage, in the form of a suit or travelling case, comprising a soft-walled outer housing or shell, 10, formed of a pliable fabric, such as plastic sheeting or plastic coated or plastic impregnated textile fabric, of any type conventionally used or suitable for the purpose. The housing or shell 10 comprises an annular fabric wall section, 12, which is preferably formed of two annular strips, 14 and 16, joined edge to edge by a preferably sewn seam, 18. The two tubular sections formed by the strips 14 and 16 are preferably partitioned from one another by a pliable partition, as of a textile fabric, 20, which may be secured in place to or between the edges of the strips 14 and 16 by the same seam 18 which joins such edges, to provide a

pair of compartments, 15 and 17, respectively. The strips 14 and 16 may be of even width, or one of them may be wider than the other, as illustrated.

Each open end of the partitioned annular wall section 12 is closed, in the conventional manner, by a pliable fabric panel, 24, which is secured to the edge of annular section 12 by a sewn seam, 26, which may include a reinforcing and protective tape or welting, 28, preferably formed with a beaded edge. Each of the panels 24 has a conventionally shaped and formed loading opening provided therein, such as is conventionally formed by the tongue, 32, cut out therefrom; such tongue 32 also serving as the closure for the opening and being securable in closed position by the slide fastener, 34, secured to its edge and to the edge of the opening.

Individual reinforcing or rigidifying frames, 36 and 38, are inserted, respectively into each of the compartments 15 and 17, through their respective loading openings. Each of frames 36 and 38 is of a width substantially equal to its overlying strip, 14 or 16, as the case may be, and of a length fully equal to the length thereof, and of corresponding annular shape, so that when the ends of the frame within each compartment are brought into abutment, it will tightly stretch the overlying annular strip. The frames 36 and 38 are inserted and tensed in the conventional manner and are each provided with the conventional lock plate, 40, secured thereto at one end, on its inner surface, in overlapping relation to the other end thereof, so as to lock such other end of the frame against the overlying strip, likewise as is conventional.

Reinforcing means may be provided on the exterior of the annular wall section 12, over the edge of the partition 20, arranged to overlie the contiguous edge portions of the frames 36 and 38 to each side of the partition, to inhibit the sliding displacement of such frames relative to one another. While any suitable reinforcing means, such as a tape or ribbon, may be used for the purpose, I have shown in the illustrative embodiment of the invention a reinforcing means that may be quickly, easily and economically assembled with the annular wall section 12 and partition 20. Such illustrated reinforcing means consists of a tape or welting, 22, having a bead at one edge, which is secured by its other edge, to the wall section 12 and partition 20 by the same seam 18 that secures the latter to one another and at the same time. The seam 18 is formed with the fabric edges which it joins inwardly directed, and, when the frame sections 36 and 38 are arranged in rigidifying position within the compartments 15 and 17, the seam 18 is upset to have the joined fabric edges overlie the edge portion of one of the frame sections on the interior of the housing 10, and to have the beaded edge of the welting 22 overlie the edge portion of the other of the frame sections on the exterior of the housing 10; as clearly shown in Fig. 2 of the drawings.

The frame sections 36 and 38, in the assembled luggage, are kept against moving away from one another by the side wall panels which press their contiguous edges toward one another.

The frame members 36 and 38 may be bent and disposed within the compartments 15 and 17 in the conventional manner, so that at least one of them, preferably the wider one, has its lock plate 40 disposed in position to serve as a reinforcing base for a handle 42 that may be secured thereover, as shown in Fig. 3 of the drawings. The completed and assembled luggage article may have a lining, 48, cover the inner surfaces of the frame sections 36 and 38, and may be otherwise finished and ornamented in any conventional manner, as by the provision of hobs, 44, on which the article may be rested, and as by the provision of corner reinforcements, 46, on the housing 10, if desired.

This completes the description of the luggage articles of the present invention and of the method by which they are formed and assembled. It will be apparent that such luggage articles are made of a minimum of standard parts that are assembled by a minimum of operations in a minimum of time and with a minimum of labor, to thereby make them highly economical to produce. It will also be apparent that such articles of luggage are as strong, sturdy and durable as the similar articles of luggage made according to prior practice and they are of lighter weight than such similar articles.

It will be further apparent that numerous modifications and variations in the luggage articles of the invention and in the method of making the same may be made by any one skilled in the art, in accordance with the principles of the invention hereinabove set forth and without the exercise of any inventive ingenuity. I desire, therefore, to be protected for any and all such modifications and variations that may be made within the spirit of the invention and the scope of the claims hereto appended.

What I claim is:

1. An article of luggage of the character described, comprising a soft, pliable walled outer housing, said outer housing comprising an annular wall section defining a periphery thereof and formed of a pair of annular strips joined edge to edge, a partition having pliable soft-textured marginal edge portions secured by said marginal edge portions to said annular wall section at the junction of said strips and dividing said annular wall section into two outwardly facing compartments, a panel secured to the free edge of each of said strips to form a complementary wall for each of said compartments, an opening and closure therefor provided in each of said last named panels, and an individual rigidifying frame disposed in each of said compartments against the inner face of the annular wall thereof, said individual rigidifying frame extending the full length of the inner periphery of the annular wall section of said compartment and the full inner width thereof and reinforcing means provided on said annular wall section at said junction of said strips, said reinforcing means being formed and arranged to overlie the contiguous edge portions of said rigidifying frames.

2. The article of luggage of claim 1, wherein said annular strips are joined by a sewn seam and said partition is secured there to by said sewn seam.

3. The article of luggage of claim 1, wherein said annular strips are joined by a sewn seam and said reinforcing means comprises a welting having a beaded edge secured to said annular wall section by said sewn seam in position to have portions thereof overlie contiguous edge portions of said frames.

4. The article of luggage of claim 1, wherein said reinforcing means comprises a welting strip having a beaded edge portion provided at the junction of said annular strips, and a single sewn seam joins the marginal edge portions of said annular strips, said partition and said welting, said seam arranged with the marginal edge portions connected thereby facing inwardly and said beaded edge of said welting disposed on the exterior of said annular housing section, in position overlying the adjacent edge portion of one of said rigidifying frames.

5. An article of luggage of the character described, comprising a soft, pliable-walled outer housing, said outer housing comprising an annular wall section defining a periphery thereof and formed of a pair of annular strips, juxtaposed edge-to-edge, a partition between said annular strips, and a line of stitching connecting the juxtaposed marginal edge portions of said annular strips and the marginal edge portions of said partition into a unitary structure comprising a pair of back-to-back compartments; said marginal edge portions facing inwardly into said housing, a panel secured to the free edge of each of said annular strips to form a complementary wall for each of said compartments, each said panel having an opening and closure therefor of lesser size than said panel provided therein; and an individual rigidifying frame dis-

posed in each of said compartments and tensed against the inner face of said annular strip of said compartment, said rigidifying frame extending the full length of the inner periphery of said annular strip and substantially the full inner width thereof.

6. In an article of luggage of the character described, including a soft-walled outer housing comprising an annular wall defining a periphery of said article and a panel secured to the edge of said annular wall at each side thereof, said panels forming the complementary walls of said housing, a partition having pliable, soft-textured marginal edge portions secured by said edge portions to said annular wall intermediate its ends, dividing the same into two outwardly facing compartments, an opening and closure therefor provided in each of said panels, an individual rigidifying frame section disposed in each of said compartments against the inner face of said annular wall section, each said rigidifying frame section extending the full length and width of the inner periphery of said annular wall section of said compartment, and

reinforcing means secured on said annular wall section over the edge of said partition, said reinforcing means arranged to overlie contiguous edge portions of said rigidifying frame sections.

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