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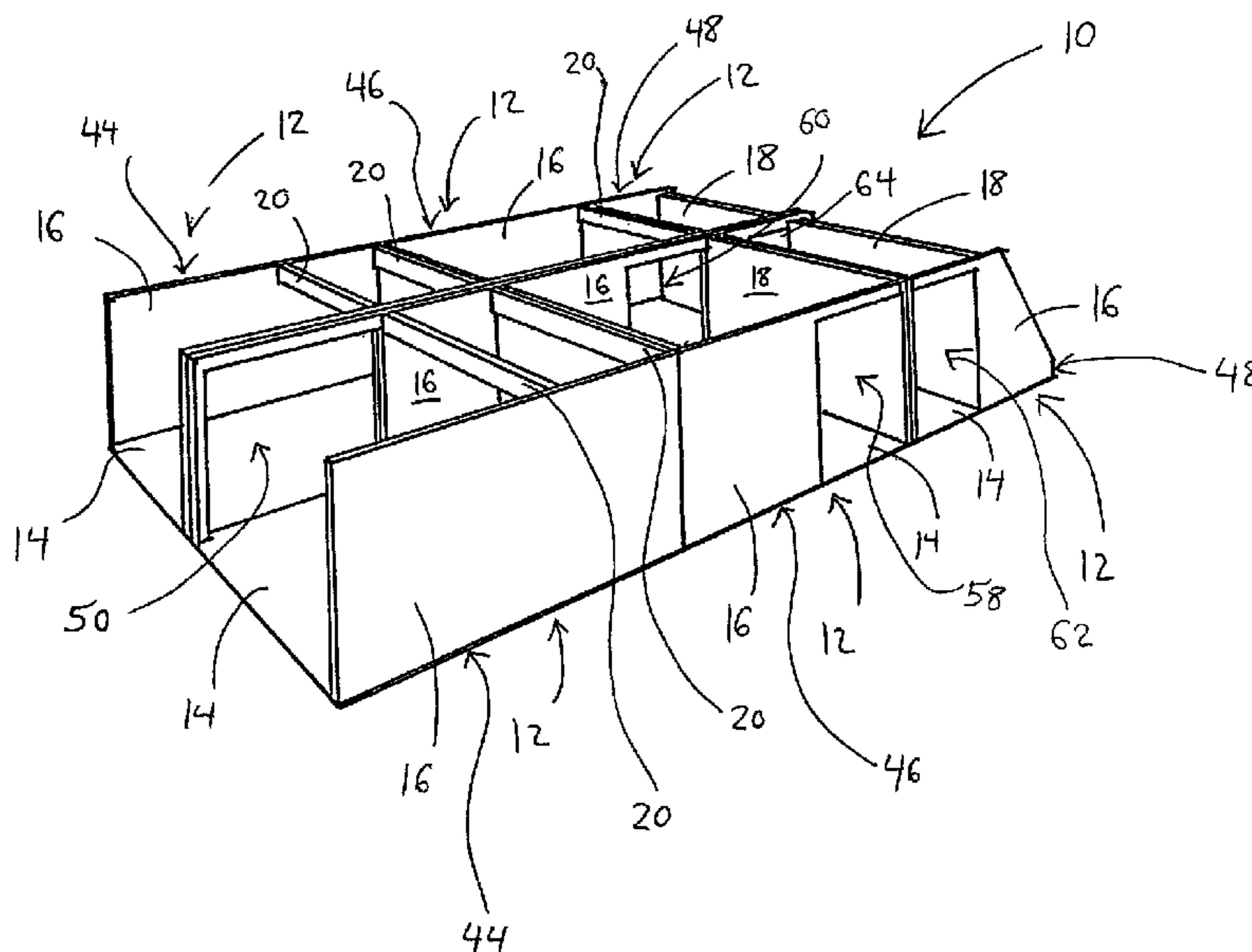
(51) Int.Cl.⁷ B60R 5/04, B60P 3/38

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(54) **CONTENEUR DE RANGEMENT MODULAIRE**

**MULTI-COMPARTIMENTS ET PLATE-FORME SERVANT
DE LIT**

(54) **MODULAR MULTI-COMPARTMENT STORAGE CONTAINER
AND SLEEPING PLATFORM**



(57) A modular storage container and sleeping platform for removable installation in vehicles. The invention is particularly adapted for use in mini-vans having removable rear passenger seats. The invention comprises a plurality of portable storage units each having a cover adjustable between open and closed positions. Each of the storage units is removably securable to a seat emplacement of the vehicle. When the storage units are assembled together they define a plurality of storage compartments of different sizes and orientations which are accessible from the rear and side doors of the vehicle. In the assembled configuration, the covers together define a flat sleeping platform when they are adjusted to the closed position.

Abstract of the Disclosure

A modular storage container and sleeping platform for removable installation in vehicles. The invention is particularly adapted
5 for use in mini-vans having removable rear passenger seats. The invention comprises a plurality of portable storage units each having a cover adjustable between open and closed positions. Each of the storage units is removably securable to a seat emplacement of the vehicle. When the storage units are assembled together they define a plurality of storage
10 compartments of different sizes and orientations which are accessible from the rear and side doors of the vehicle. In the assembled configuration, the covers together define a flat sleeping platform when they are adjusted to the closed position.

MODULAR MULTI-COMPARTMENT STORAGE

CONTAINER AND SLEEPING PLATFORM

Field of the Invention

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This application relates to a modular storage container and sleeping platform for removable installation in vehicles. The invention is particularly adapted for use in mini-vans having removable rear passenger seats.

10

Background of the Invention

Mini-vans having removable rear passenger seats have been available for many years and are becoming increasingly popular. Such vans are typically capable of seating seven or more passengers. When necessary, the rear passenger seats may be easily decoupled from the seat emplacements and removed from the vehicle for increasing the cargo holding space. This feature is particularly appealing to outdoor enthusiasts who occasionally need to haul bulky camping equipment and the like in the cargo hold. Many outdoor enthusiasts also desire the capacity to sleep in their vehicles when travelling to avoid the need to erect tents or tow separate campers or tent trailers.

Vans that have been "camperized" are of course well known in the prior art. Such vans usually have a kitchen area which may be adjusted to provide sleeping spaces at night. Typically the sleeping spaces consist of single bed units which do not permit couples to sleep side by side. Camperized vans also often have extended roofs which may prevent entry into some underground parking lots. A further drawback of

camperized vans is that they cannot easily be converted back to a seven seat passenger vehicle and are therefore less versatile than conventional mini-vans.

5 Recreational vehicles such as motor homes are appealing to many consumers seeking the combined advantages of spacious sleeping quarters and sufficient passenger seating and storage holds. However, recreation vehicles are much larger than mini-vans and are therefore not suitable for day to day use in cities. For example, most recreation vehicles
10 are too large to fit in conventional covered parking lots or outdoor parking stalls.

 Many inventions are known in the prior art for storing and organizing articles stowed in the cargo holds of vehicles. However such
15 prior art storage systems are not specially adapted for also providing a sleeping platform suitable for use in mini-vans and the like. For example, United States Patent No. 4,705,315, which issued to Kim on November 10, 1987, relates to a storage container containing multiple compartments which is slidably installed within the cargo space of a trade van. The Kim
20 container cannot be used as a sleeping platform and, since it is not of modular construction, it cannot be easily removed from the van by a single person.

 United States Patent No. 5,441,183, which issued to Frenzel on
25 August 15, 1995, suffers from similar limitations. The Frenzel invention relates to a vehicular compartmentalizer unit which defines a plurality of storage units below a flat platform cover. While the Frenzel invention achieves the important advantage of concealing the stored articles, it is not

of modular construction and is not removably securable to the frame of the vehicle. Although the Frenzel platform could conceivably be used as a sleeping platform, this would obstruct access to primary storage compartments of the container and therefore defeat one of the objects of the invention. A further drawback is that the Frenzel container has a low profile and is therefore not suitable for holding bulky camping equipment and the like, such as ice coolers.

Some vehicle storage containers of modular construction are known in the prior art. United States Patent No. 5,469,999, which issued to Phirippidis on November 28, 1995, discloses a modular storage and organizing system for vehicles including a plurality of generally box-shaped units. United States Patent No. 5,667,115, which issued to Verhaeg on September 16, 1997, discloses a vehicle interior storage container which may consist of separate compartments designed to integrally fit together. The Phirippidis and Verhaeg modular units are not, however, specially adapted for connection to the seat emplacements of mini-vans nor do they together define a sleeping platform suitable for use by multiple occupants of the vehicle.

20

The need has therefore arisen for a combination multi-compartment storage container and sleeping platform of modular construction suitable for removable installation in mini-vans and the like.

25 Summary of the Invention

In accordance with the invention, a combination storage container and sleeping platform apparatus is provided. The apparatus is

adapted for installation in the cargo hold of a vehicle, such as mini-van having removable rear passenger seats.

5 The apparatus includes a plurality of portable storage units of substantially equal height, each of the storage units comprising bottom panel(s) and spaced support panels, such as vertically disposed sidewalls or endwalls, extending upwardly from the bottom panel(s). The various storage units are alignable to together define a plurality of interior storage compartments within the container.

10

The apparatus further includes a plurality of covers for covering the storage units. The covers are supported by the support panels above the bottom panels and are each moveable between an open position permitting access to one or more of the interior compartments and
15 a closed position concealing the contents of the compartments when viewed from above. The covers extend in a substantially common plane above the compartments in the closed position to form the sleeping platform. The sleeping platform is preferably large enough to accommodate two adults lying side-by-side.

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A plurality of connectors are also provided for removably coupling the storage units to a frame portion of the vehicle, such as the seat emplacements of the removable passenger seats.

Brief Description of the Drawings

In drawings which illustrate embodiments of the invention,
5 but which should not be construed as restricting the spirit or scope of the
invention in any way,

Figure 1 is a right, rear perspective view of a first embodiment
of the applicant's modular storage container with the covers removed;
10

Figure 2 is a left, front perspective view of the container of
Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a rear perspective view of the container of Figure
15 1;

Figure 4 is a top plan view of the container of Figure 1
showing alternative panel extensions;

Figure 5 is a rear perspective view of the applicant's container
with the covers attached and adjusted to the closed position;
20

Figure 6 is a rear perspective view of the container of Figure
5 with the rearmost covers pivoted to the open position;
25

Figure 7 is a top plan view of the container of Figure 5;

Figure 8 is a rear elevational view of the container of Figure 5;

Figure 9 is a cross-sectional view of the container of Figure 5 taken along section lines A -A of Figure 7 and looking in the direction of the arrows;

Figure 10 is a detail view showing the attachment of a cover securement strap to a side panel of a storage unit;

Figure 11 is a detail view of the connector for securing a storage unit to an underlying seat emplacement;

Figure 12 is a cross-sectional view taken along section lines B - B of Figure 11 and looking in the direction of the arrows;

Figure 13 is a detail view of the connector of Figure 11 showing the connecting strap unwound;

Figure 14 is a left side elevational view of an alternative embodiment of the invention having a transverse storage compartment accessible from both the driver and passenger sides of the container;

Figure 15 is a top plan view of a further alternative embodiment of the invention having an extendable table at the front end of the container;

Figure 16 is a left side elevational view of the embodiment of Figure 15 showing the table in the collapsed position;

Figure 17 is a front elevational view of the embodiment of
5 Figure 15 showing the table in the collapsed position;

Figure 18 is a left side elevational view of the embodiment of Figure 15 showing the table in the extended position;

10 Figure 19 is front elevational view of the embodiment of Figure 15 showing the table in the extended position;

Figure 20 is a top plan view of a further alternative embodiment of the invention comprising four storage units and an
15 extendable platform;

Figure 21 is a left side elevational view of the container of Figure 20 showing the platform in the folded position;

20 Figure 22 is a right side elevational view of the container of Figure 20 showing the platform in the extended position extending above a folded passenger seat;

Figure 23 is a top plan view of the embodiment of Figure 20
25 configured to include eight storage units and with the platform removed;

Figure 24 is a left side elevational view of the embodiment of Figure 23; and

Figure 25 is a right side elevational view of the embodiment of Figure 23.

5 Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

 This application relates to a modular storage container 10 for installation in the cargo hold of vehicles. Container 10 is particularly adapted for installation in the cargo hold of a mini-van after the rear
10 passenger seats have been removed.

 Container 10 comprises a plurality of modular storage units 12 which may be releasably assembled together. Each unit 12 is sized so that it may be easily installed and removed from the vehicle cargo hold by
15 a single person.

 In the first embodiment of the invention illustrated in Figures 1 - 8, container 10 consists of six separate storage units 12. In an alternative embodiment illustrated in Figures 20 - 25, container 10 may
20 consist of either four or eight separate storage units 12. As should be apparent to a person skilled in the art, the specific number of storage units 12 employed is not a critical feature of the invention, provided that each separate storage unit 12 is readily portable.

25 As illustrated in the drawings, storage units 12 are configured to define storage compartments of different sizes and orientations when container 10 is assembled together. Each of the storage units 12 is preferably rectangular in shape and consists of at least one bottom panel

14 and opposed side panels 16 which extend upwardly therefrom. Some storage units 12 may also include end panels 18 extending between side panels 16 for partitioning separate storage compartments. In some units 12 transverse support members 20 extending between upper portions of side panels 16 are provided for enhanced structural support.

As shown in Figure 4, some units 12 may also optionally include lateral extensions 17 for bracing against a side wall or window of the vehicle.

10

Each storage unit 12 is designed to be removably secured to the vehicle frame, such as the seat emplacements 22 of a mini-van after the rear passenger seats have been removed (Figures 11 - 13). In the illustrated embodiments, each unit 12 is securable to at least one seat emplacement 22. As shown in Figures 4 and 11 - 13, each storage unit 12 has apertures 24 formed in bottom panel 14 which are positioned for overlying a corresponding seat emplacement 22. Each seat emplacement 22 typically consists of an anchor rod 26 extending transversely within a cup-like depression 28 formed in the cargo floor of the van (Figures 11 and 12).

20

Each storage unit 12 further includes at least one fastener 30 for removably securing bottom panel 14 to an underlying seat emplacement 22. Each fastener 30 preferably consists of a bar 32 mounted on bottom panel 14 and extending across an aperture 24 directly overlying the anchor rod 26 of a corresponding seat emplacement 22. Fastener 30 further includes a strap 34 having one end secured to bar 32 and which may be quickly wrapped around anchor rod 26 to securely couple rod 26

25

and bar 32 together as shown in Figure 12. Strap 34 may include VELCRO™ hook and loop-type fasteners or the like for easily securing and unsecuring strap 34 to anchor rod 26.

5 As should be apparent to someone skilled in the art, other equivalent means for removably securing storage units 12 to seat emplacements 22, or some other component of the vehicle frame, may be substituted for fasteners 30. As should also be apparent to a person skilled in the art, the number, placement and configuration of apertures 24 and
10 fasteners 30 will vary depending upon the type and model of the mini-van or other vehicle into which container 10 is installed.

As illustrated in Figures 5 - 8, each storage unit 12 includes a removable cover 36. Depending upon the specific configuration of the
15 storage unit 12, each cover 36 is coupled to an upper edge of a side panel 16, end panel 18 or a transverse support member 20 with hinge(s) 38. Individual hinges or piano hinges would be suitable for this purpose, for example. Each cover 36 is moveable between an open position enabling access to storage compartment(s) within the interior of storage unit 12
20 (Figure 6) and a closed position covering such storage compartment(s) (Figure 5). Storage units 12 are of substantially equal height (preferably approximately 16 inches) so that covers 36 together define a flat sleeping platform when units 12 are assembled together and covers 36 are moved to the closed position. Covers 36 also fulfill the important function of
25 concealing articles stowed within storage units 12 when the vehicle doors are closed to deter theft.

Container 10 further includes means for securing covers 36 in the closed position when pairs of storage units 12 are assembled side by side. As shown in Figure 9, each storage unit 12 has a cover retention strap 40 secured to a lateral side panel 16 thereof. If strap 40 is mounted on an inner surface of side panel 16, a small slot 42 may be formed in bottom panel 14 to enable strap 40 to pass therethrough (Figure 10). In use, strap 40 is extended around the outer and upper surfaces of unit 12 as shown in Figure 9 and secured to a corresponding strap 40 fastened to an adjacent unit 12 to maintain covers 36 in the closed position. Straps 40 may comprise mating VELCRO™ hook and loop-type fasteners for this purpose. Straps 40 prevent covers 36 from rattling if the vehicle travels over bumpy roads or from opening if the vehicle is overturned. Straps 40 may also be used to secure mattresses or bedding to the sleeping platform defined by covers 36.

15

Figures 1 - 8 disclose a first embodiment of container 10 comprising six separate storage units 12, namely a pair of rear units 44, a pair of middle units 46 and a pair of front units 48. Rear units 44 have open rear ends for gaining access to storage compartments defined within container 10 through the rear doors of the vehicle. In the illustrated embodiment, openings 50 may be formed in the adjacent medial side panels 16 of rear units 44 to define a transverse storage compartment at the rear end of container 10 (Figure 1). Rear units 44 may also optionally include support legs 52 pivotably coupled to the undersurface of cover 36 for supporting the rear end of cover 36 in the closed position (Figure 8).

25

Optionally, each rear unit 44 may each comprise a two-part cover 36 consisting of first section 54, located closest to the rear end of unit

44, and a second section 56 connected by a pair of spaced hinges 38 (Figure 7). Cover sections 54, 56 are hinged together above a transverse support member 20 (Figure 4). As shown best in Figure 6, first section 54 may be folded to a flat position resting on first section 56. Each second section 56 is pivotably coupled by means of hinges 38 to a transverse support member 20 extending at the front end of rear unit 44 (Figure 7) to enable the entire cover 36 to move between open and closed positions.

In the first embodiment illustrated in the drawings, middle units 46 are generally similar in construction to rear units 44. Each middle unit has an open rear end which is alignable with an open front end of a corresponding rear unit 44 when container 10 is assembled to form an elongated longitudinally extending storage compartment. In the illustrated embodiment middle units 46 are not entirely symmetrical in construction. Rather, the left side unit 46 located behind the driver seat has a continuous lateral side panel 16 and an open front end (Figure 1). The right side unit 46 located behind the front passenger seat has a continuous end panel 18 at its front end and an opening 58 formed in its lateral side panel 16. As shown best in Figure 1, opening 58 is aligned with openings 60 formed in the medial side panels 16 of middle units 46 to form an elongated transversely extending storage compartment accessible when the sliding passenger side doors of the mini-van are opened.

Some mini-van models have sliding driver side doors as well for improved access from either side of the vehicle. In this case, the lateral side panel 16 of the driver side middle unit 46 may include an opening 58 as illustrated in the alternative embodiment of Figure 14.

As shown best in Figure 7, covers 36 for middle units 46 are secured by means of longitudinally spaced hinges 38. Thus, unlike rear cover sections 54, 56 described above which pivot about a transverse axis, covers 36 overlying units 46 pivot about a longitudinal axis for improved
5 access from the side of the vehicle.

As shown in Figure 4, depending upon the seat configuration of the mini-van or other vehicle in question, each middle unit 46 may be removably secured to two separate seat emplacements 22 by means of
10 fasteners 30.

The pair of front units 48 are also not symmetrical in the illustrated embodiment. In particular, the driver side front unit 48 has an open rear end, a continuous end panel 18 proximate its front end and a
15 continuous lateral side panel 16 extending between the rear and front ends (Figure 2). The passenger-side front unit, by contrast, has end panels 18 at its rear end and proximate to its front end and an opening 62 formed in the lateral side panel 16. Opening 62 is aligned with openings 64 formed in the medial side panels of front units 48 as shown best in Figures 1 and
20 2 to form a front transverse storage compartment extending across the width of container 10 which is accessible when the passenger side sliding door is opened.

As discussed above in connection with middle units 46, if the
25 mini-van model has a driver side sliding side door, then an opening 62 may also be formed in the lateral side panel 16 of the driver-side front unit 48 to optionally permit driver-side access to the front transverse storage compartment (Figure 14).

As shown best in Figure 2, in front units 48 the forwardmost edge of each side panels 16 is tapered so that it will not obstruct movement of the front driver and passenger seats from upright to reclined positions. Small storage compartments are defined at the front end of each unit 48 forwardly of end panel 18. Such front storage compartments are particularly suited for stowing small articles behind the driver and front passenger seats, such as purses, maps, books, small pillows, toiletries or snacks, for ready accessibility when travelling. Each of the front storage compartments has an open front end except for a narrow front runner 66 which projects upwardly a short distance above bottom panel 14 and extends between opposed side panels 16 (Figure 2).

As shown best in Figures 5 and 7, in the illustrated embodiment each front unit 48 comprises a cover 36 consisting of a first section 68 and a second section 70 which are coupled together with a pair of transversely spaced hinges 38. As shown in Figure 7, first cover section 68 overlies part of the forwardmost storage compartments described above and may be pivoted rearwardly to a position resting flat on second cover section 70. Second cover section 70 is pivotably coupled at its rear end to an end panel 18 (passenger side front unit 48) or a transverse support member 20 (driver-side front unit 48) by means of a pair of spaced hinges 38.

When rear, middle and front units 44, 46 and 48 are assembled as described above, they together form a container 10 having a plurality of storage compartments of different sizes and orientations. For example, a single elongated compartment extends longitudinally on the driver side of the container from the rear end thereof to the end panel 18 proximate the front end. A somewhat shorter compartment extends

longitudinally from the rear end of container 10 to the end panel 18 located at the front end of middle unit 46. Transverse compartments accessible from the side(s) of the vehicle also extend across the width of container 10 near the front end thereof. A transverse compartment extending through opening 50 is also configured at the rear end of container 10 (Figure 1).

The storage compartments defined within container 10 may of course be used for different purposes. For example, long items, such as tents or skis could be stowed in larger compartments whereas more compact items, such as coolers, picnic baskets, and clothing, could be stowed in smaller compartments. When installed, the lateral side panels 16 of container 10 are preferably spaced a short distance from the interior walls of the mini-van to define an additional elongated storage space for stowing thin items, such as tarp posts or toasting sticks.

15

The size and orientation of the storage compartments in container 10 may vary without departing from the invention. In particular, the various storage units 12 which comprise container 10 may include wall panels, wall openings and partitions which are configured differently than those illustrated in Figures 1 - 8, thereby resulting in alternative combinations of storage compartments when units 12 are assembled. Preferably storage units 12 are releasably coupled together in the assembled configuration using removable bolts (not shown) or similar fasteners. Such fasteners could extend, for example, between adjoining panels of storage units 12.

25

Figures 15 - 19 illustrate one possible alternative embodiment of the invention having an extendable table generally designated 74

located at the forward end of container 10. In particular, front storage elements 48 together define a central rectangular compartment 75 which is covered by an upper panel 76 of table 74. In a collapsed position, panel 76 extends in substantially the same plane as adjacent covers 36 to form
5 part of the applicant's flat sleeping platform (Figure 17). Panel 76 may be supported in an elevated position as shown in Figures 18 and 19 by raising telescopic support legs 78 within sleeves 80 to the desired height and folding a support panel 82 downwardly and forwardly to the load bearing position best shown in Figure 18. Support panel 82 is hingedly coupled
10 to the front end of upper panel 76 and is stowed immediately underneath panel 76 in the collapsed position (Figure 17).

In use, a user may adjust table 74 to the elevated position as described above while sitting on an adjoining cover 36 and facing
15 inwardly. The user's feet may be placed within central compartment 77 underneath upper panel 76. Panel 76 may then be used as a flat table support for serving food and the like in the usual manner. The adjustment steps are reversed to return table 74 to the collapsed position.

20 Figures 20 - 25 illustrate a further alternative embodiment of container 10 optionally comprising either four or eight storage units 12. This embodiment provides users with the option of installing container 10 in a vehicle where only the rearmost passenger seats are removed and the middle seats remain installed for accommodating more passengers
25 (Figures 20 - 22); or in a vehicle where both the rearmost and middle passenger seats are removed (Figures 23 - 25). This alternative embodiment is therefore more versatile than the embodiment of Figures

1 - 8 which is only functional if both the middle and rearmost seats are removed.

In the embodiment of Figures 20 - 22, four storage units 12
5 are provided, namely a pair of rear units 90 and a pair of middle units 92. Rear units 90 are generally similar to rear units 44 of the first embodiment of the invention described above (Figure 1). Middle units 92 have been modified to comprise two separate interconnectable front and rear sections 94, 96. In the embodiment of Figures 20 - 22, only rear sections 96 are
10 employed. Front sections 94 are described further below.

An extendable platform 98 is connectable to the cover 36 of rear section 96 by means of a strap 97 (Figure 22). In the illustrated embodiment, platform 98 includes front and rear hinged sections 100, 102
15 which may be vertically stacked on cover 36 in a folded position (Figure 21) immediately behind middle passenger seats 104. Platform 98 includes apertures 99 which, in the folded position, are aligned with an aperture 101 formed in cover 36 of rear section 96. Strap 97 is threaded through apertures 99, 101 to secure platform 98 to section 96 in the folded position
20 (Figure 21).

If seats 104 are adjusted to a folded position (Figure 22), platform 98 may be extended forwardly of section 96 to overlies seats 104 and thereby provide an extended sleeping platform. Accordingly, in this
25 alternative embodiment, modular container 10 has less overall storage space but nevertheless comprises a flat sleeping platform large enough to accommodate two adults. As shown in Figure 22, the abutting surfaces of platform 98 and cover 36 of section 96 are bevelled. Strap 97 may be

threaded through apertures 99, 101 to releasably connect section 96 and platform 98 in the extended position.

As shown best in Figure 20, the side panels 16 of rear section
5 96 may be slotted to receive a removable partition 103. Partition 103 essentially functions as a temporary end wall when only rear section 96 of a middle unit 92 is employed (i.e. in the embodiment comprising extendable platform 98). As mentioned above, other removable partitions may be used in the practice of the invention depending upon the number
10 and configuration of storage compartments desired.

Rear and middle storage units 90, 92 must be of a sufficient height to clear seats 104 when such seats are folded to the position of Figure 22. The preferred height will of course depend upon the
15 specifications of the vehicle in question. In a preferred embodiment suitable for use in most mini-vans, units 90, 92 are approximately 21 inches in height.

If middle passenger seats 104 are removed from the vehicle
20 to provide additional cargo space, then eight separate storage units 12 may be employed, namely rear units 90, middle units 92 (including both sections 94 and 96) and front units 106 (Figures 23 - 25). Units 90, 92 and 106 are connected together and function in a manner similar to the first embodiment of the invention described above.

25

The tapered surfaces of sidewall panels 16 of sections 94 and 96 interfit as shown in Figures 24 and 25. Optionally, sections 94, 96 may

be coupled together by inserting a strap (not shown) through apertures 101 formed in adjacent covers 36 (Figure 23).

As will be apparent to those skilled in the art in the light of
5 the foregoing disclosure, many alterations and modifications are possible
in the practice of this invention without departing from the spirit or scope
thereof. Accordingly, the scope of the invention is to be construed in
accordance with the substance defined by the following claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A combination storage container and sleeping platform apparatus for installation in the cargo hold of a vehicle, said apparatus
5 comprising:

(a) a plurality of portable storage units of substantially equal height, each of said storage units comprising one or more bottom panels and spaced support panels extending upwardly from said bottom
10 panels, wherein said storage units are alignable to together define a plurality of interior storage compartments within said container;

(b) a plurality of covers for covering said storage units, wherein said covers are supported by said support panels above said bottom
15 panels and are each moveable between an open position permitting access to one or more of said compartments and a closed position concealing the contents of said one or more compartments when viewed from above; and

(c) a plurality of connectors, wherein each of said connectors removably couples at least one of said storage units to a frame
20 portion of said vehicle;

wherein said covers extend in a substantially common plane above said
25 compartments in said closed position to form said sleeping platform.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of said covers is hingedly connected to one or more of said support panels.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said storage units are releasably interconnectable.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said support panels
5 comprise sidewalls and endwalls of said storage units, at least some of said sidewalls and endwalls having openings formed therein.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said vehicle comprises rear passenger seats removably mountable on seat emplacements secured to
10 the frame of said vehicle, and wherein each of said connectors is adapted to mount at least one of said storage units to at least one of said seat emplacements when said rear passenger seats are removed from said vehicle.

15 6. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising fasteners for releasably fastening said covers to said storage units in said closed position.

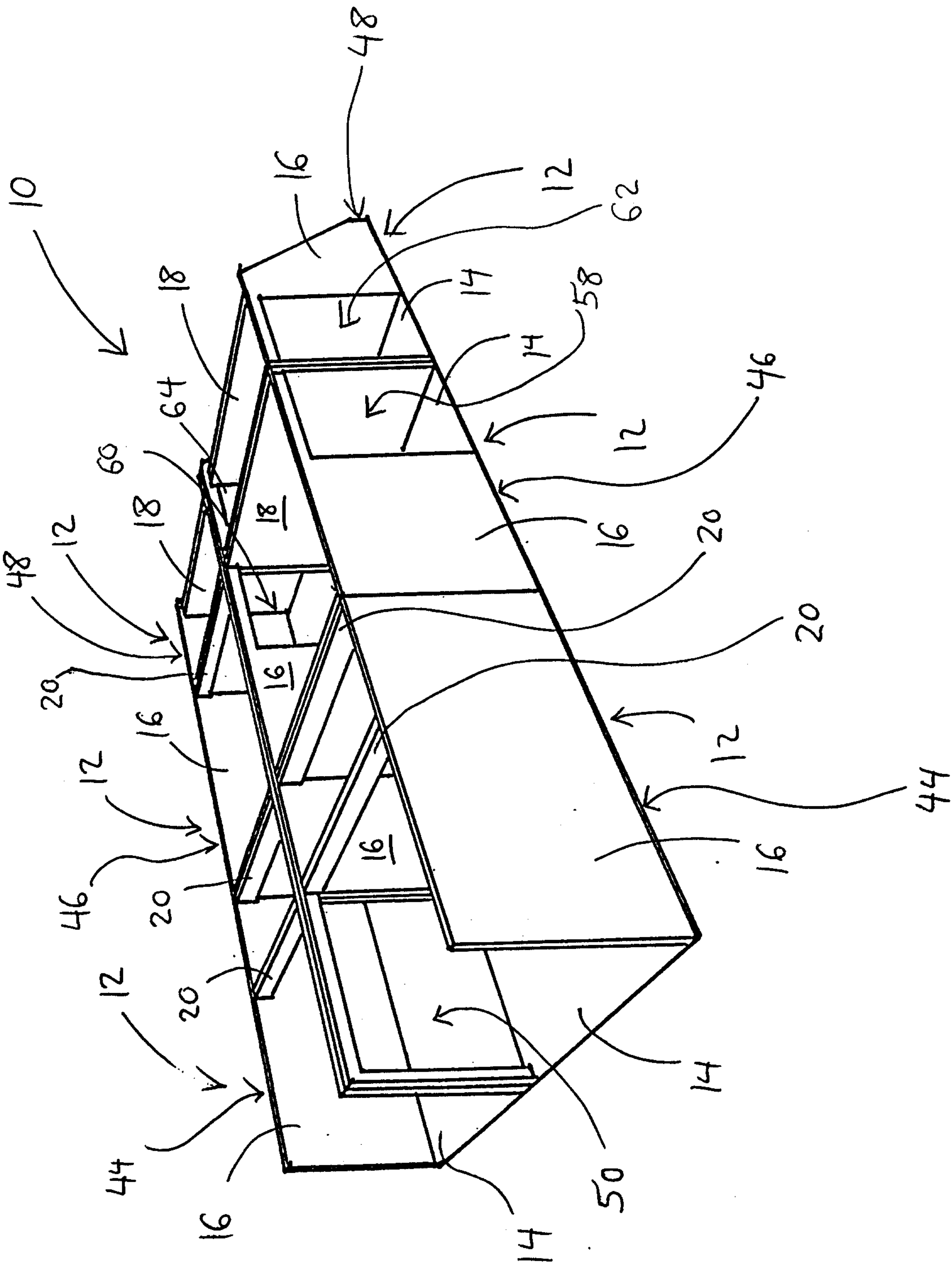
7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said sleeping platform is
20 of a size sufficient to support two adults lying side-by-side.

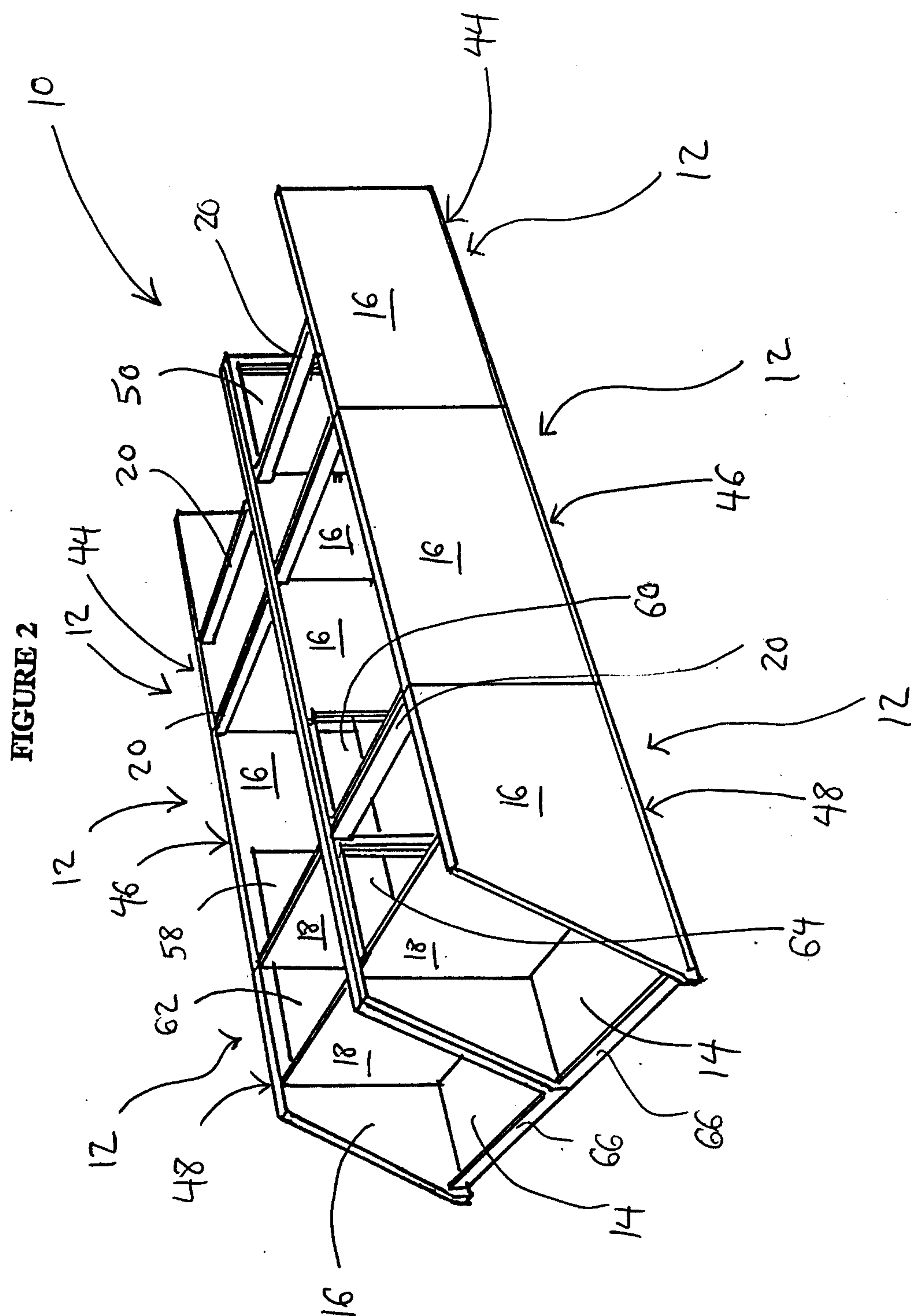
8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said covers are removably connectable to said storage units.

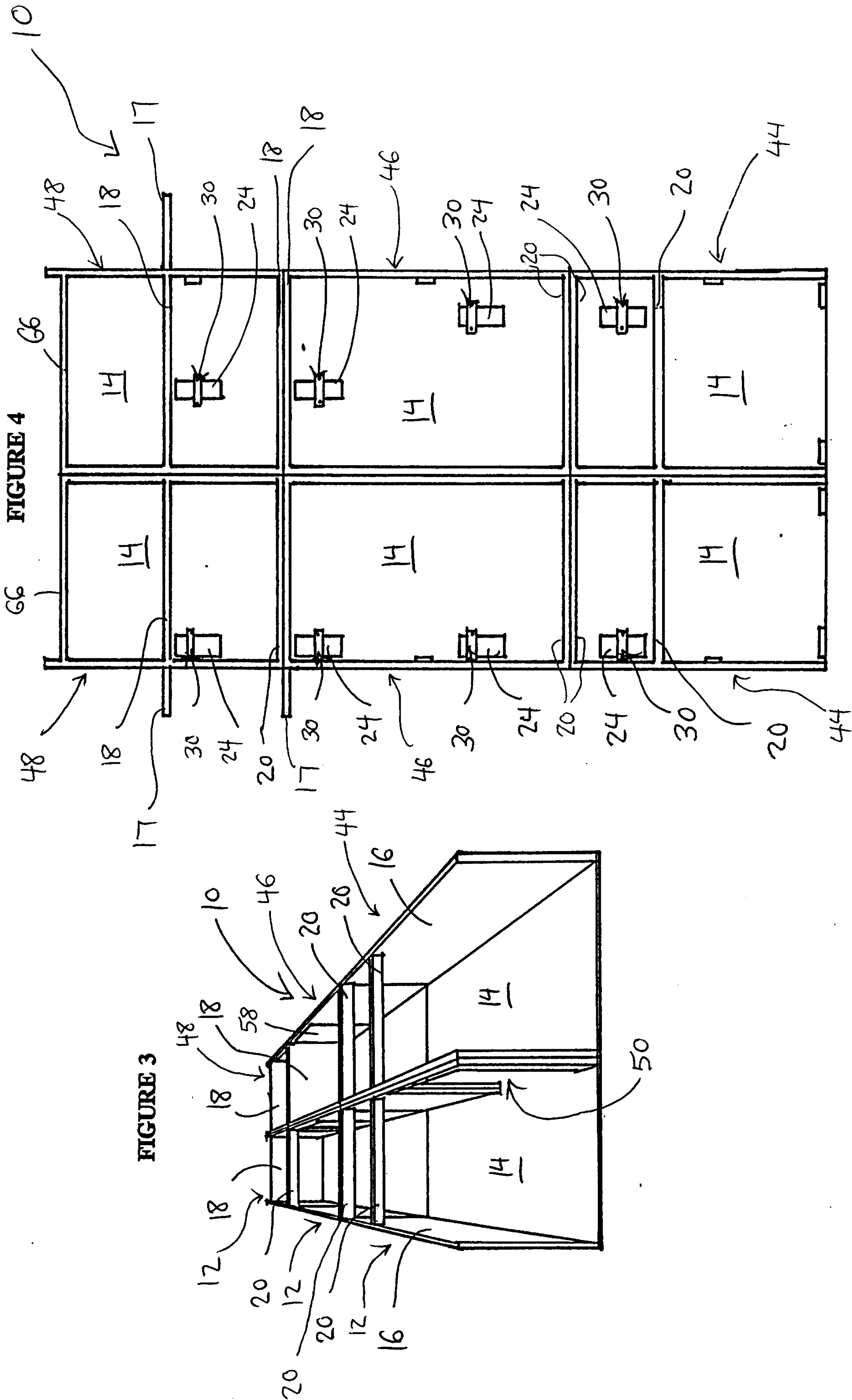
25 9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of said compartments is accessible through side portions or end portions of said storage units when said covers are in said closed position.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said container comprises between four and eight separate storage units.
11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of said covers overlies
5 a single one of said storage units in said closed position.
12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said container comprises six of said storage units, namely (a) a pair of front storage units; (b) a pair of middle storage units; and (c) a pair of rear storage units, wherein each
10 of said rear storage units has an open rear end.
13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said front storage units together define a transverse storage compartment extending across the width of said container, wherein said transverse storage compartment is
15 accessible from at least one side portion of said container.
14. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said vehicle comprises passenger seats moveable between folded and deployed positions, and wherein said covers comprise an extendable portion adapted to extend
20 above said passenger seats when said seats are in said folded position.
15. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of said storage units is readily portable by a single individual.

FIGURE 1







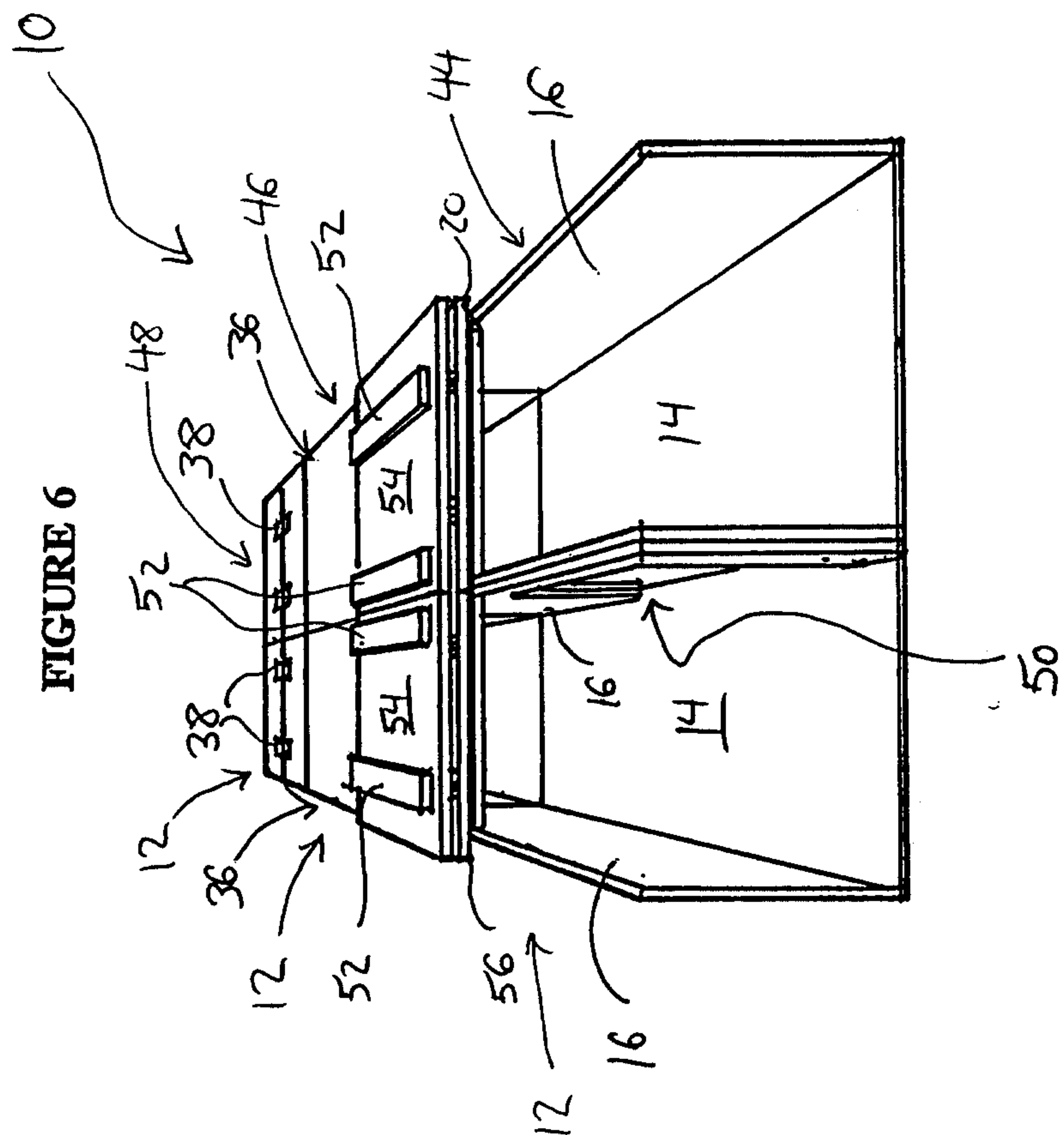
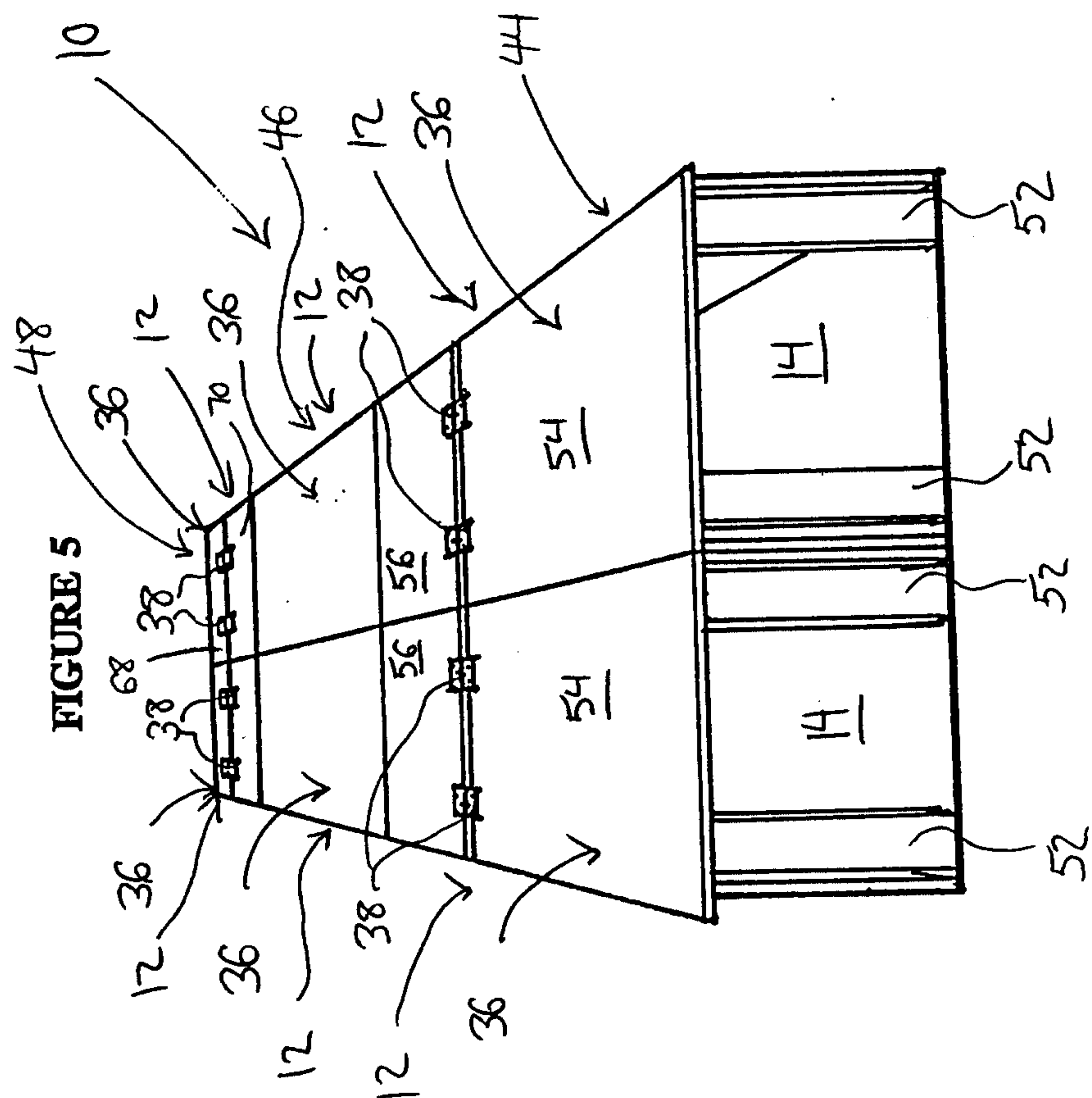


FIGURE 7

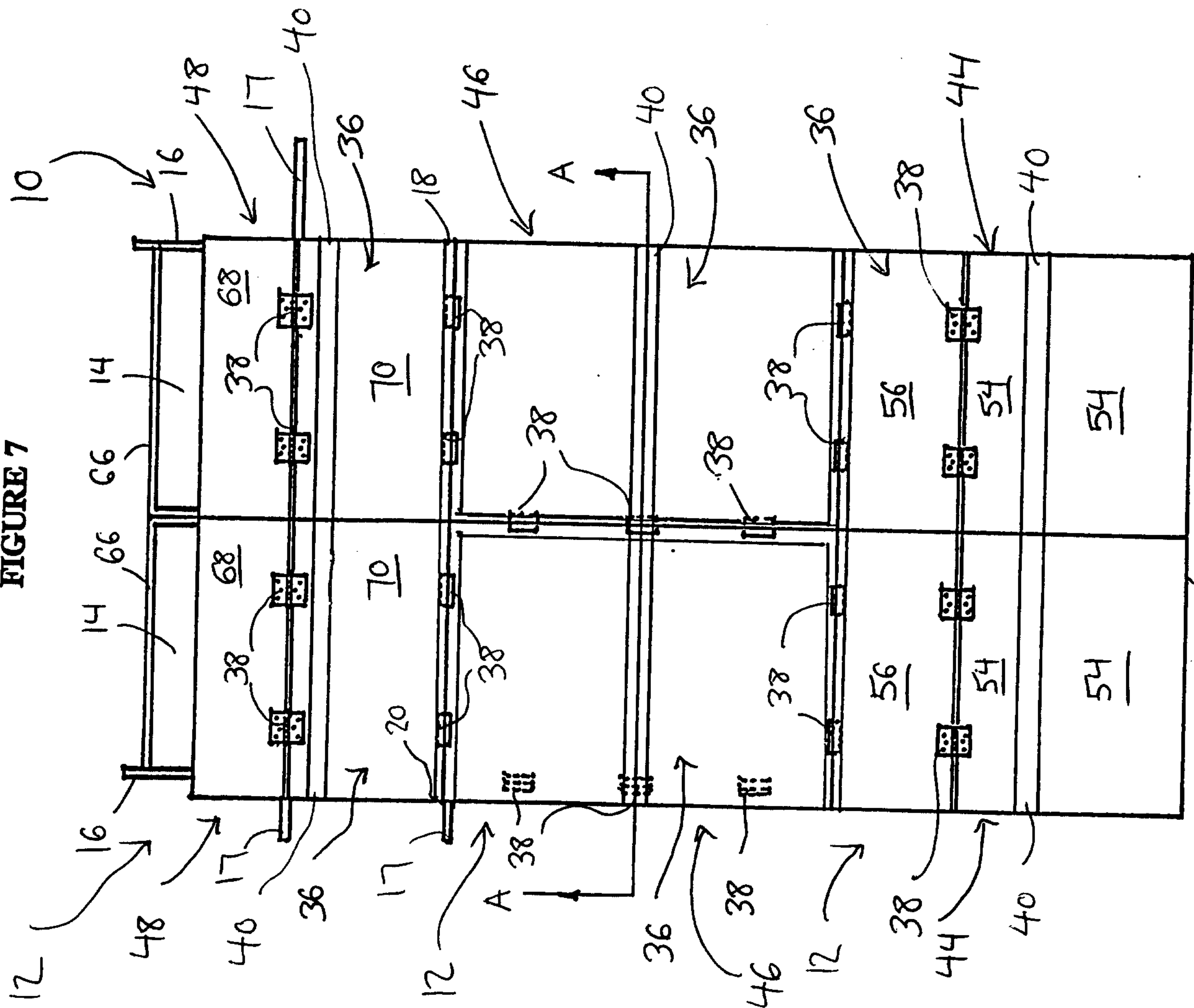


FIGURE 8

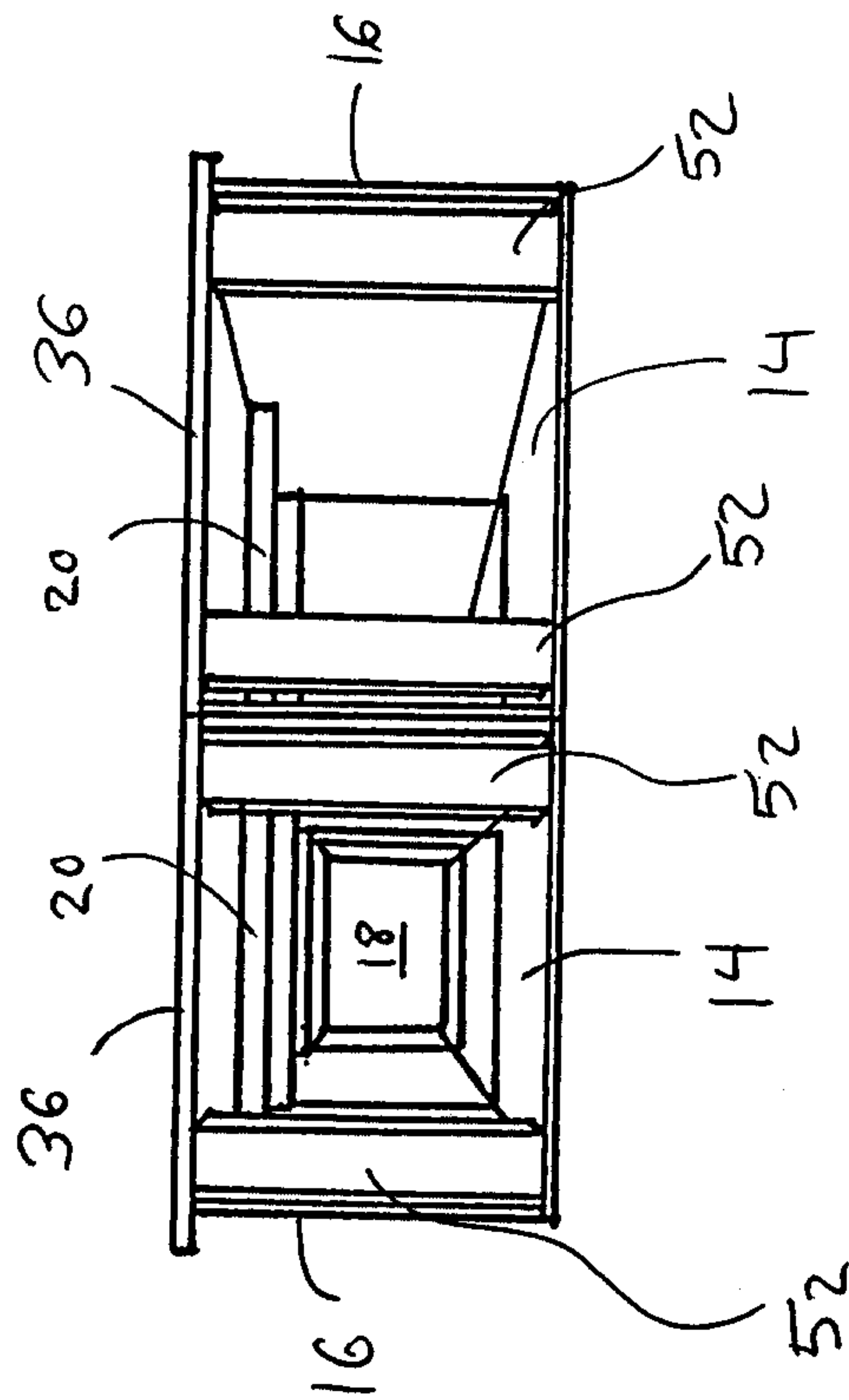


FIGURE 9

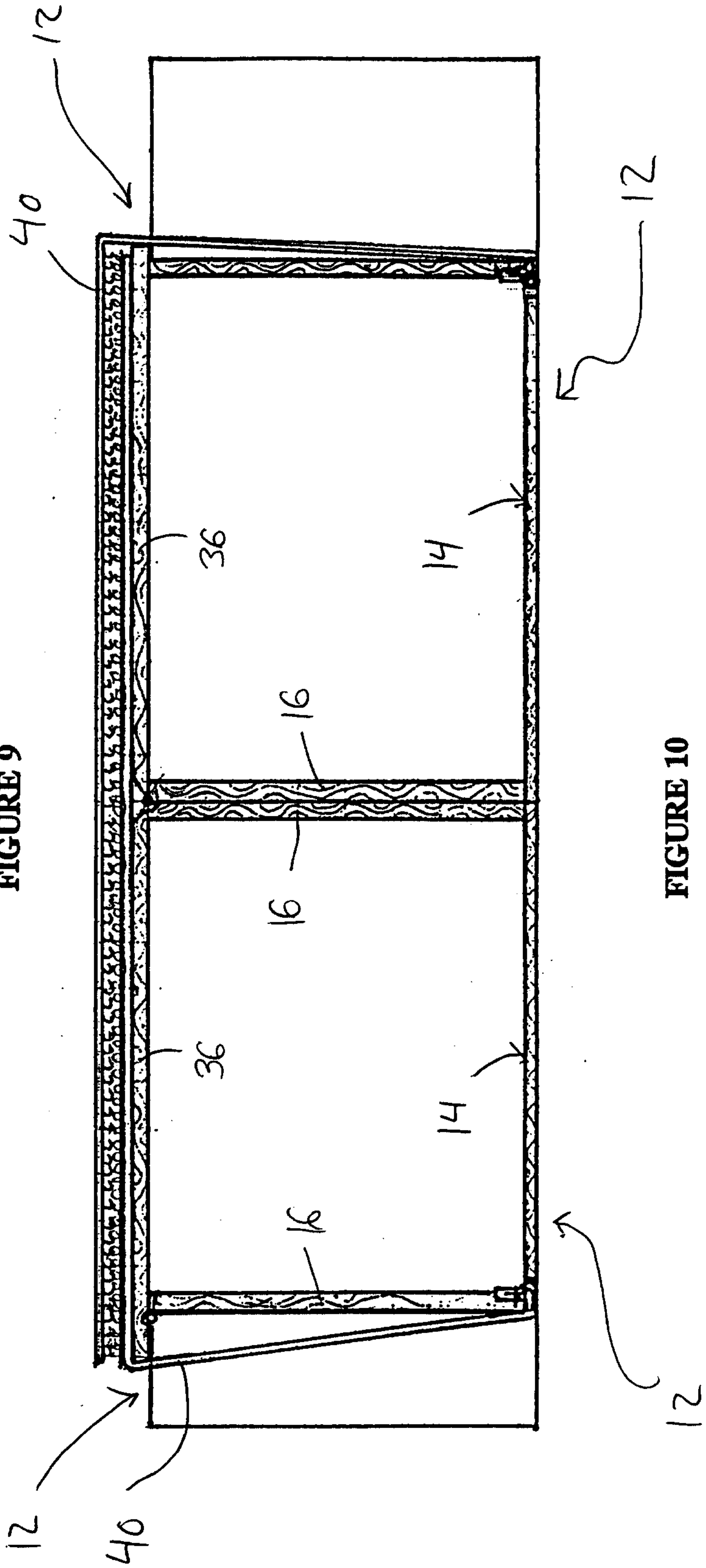


FIGURE 10

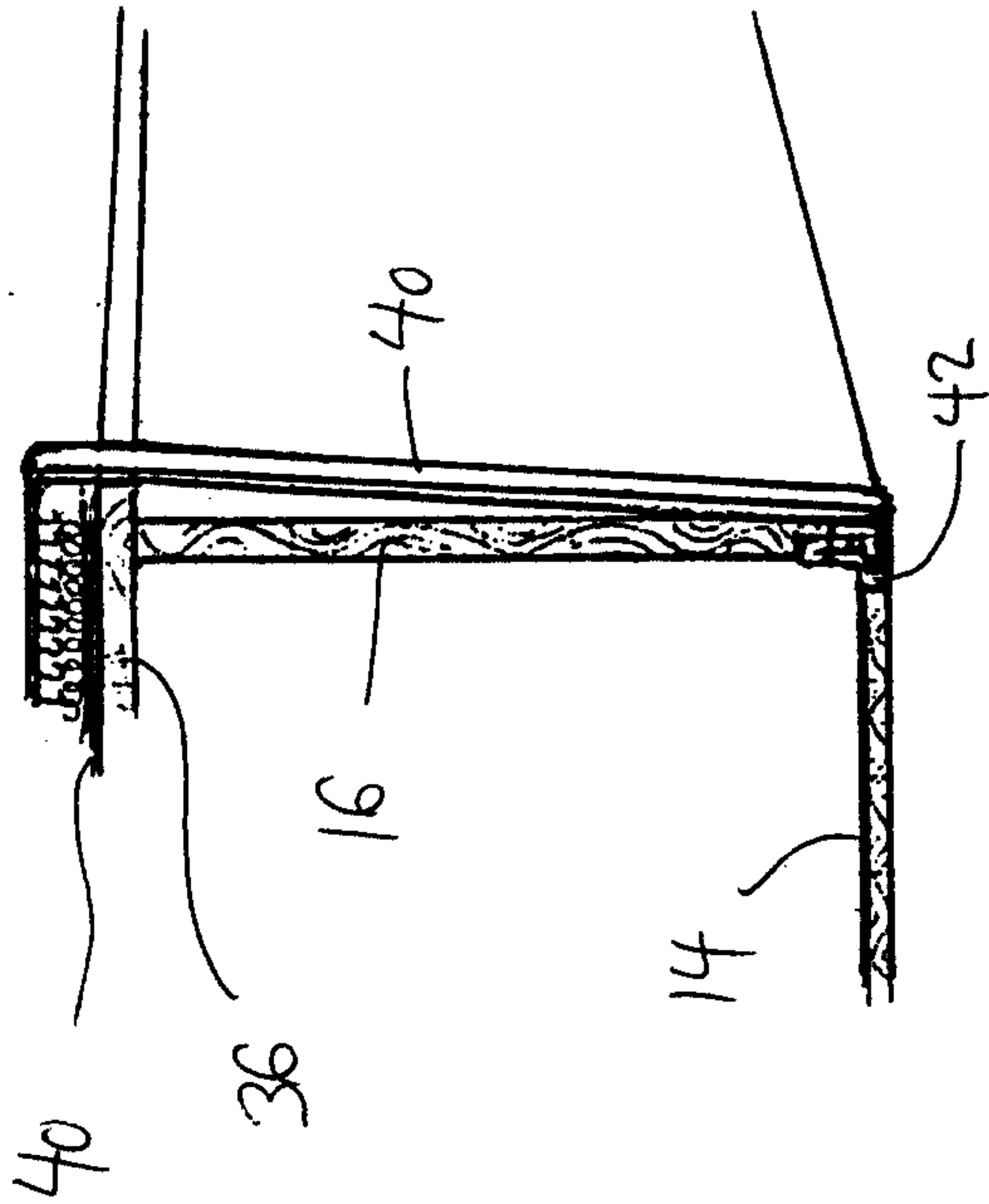


FIGURE 11

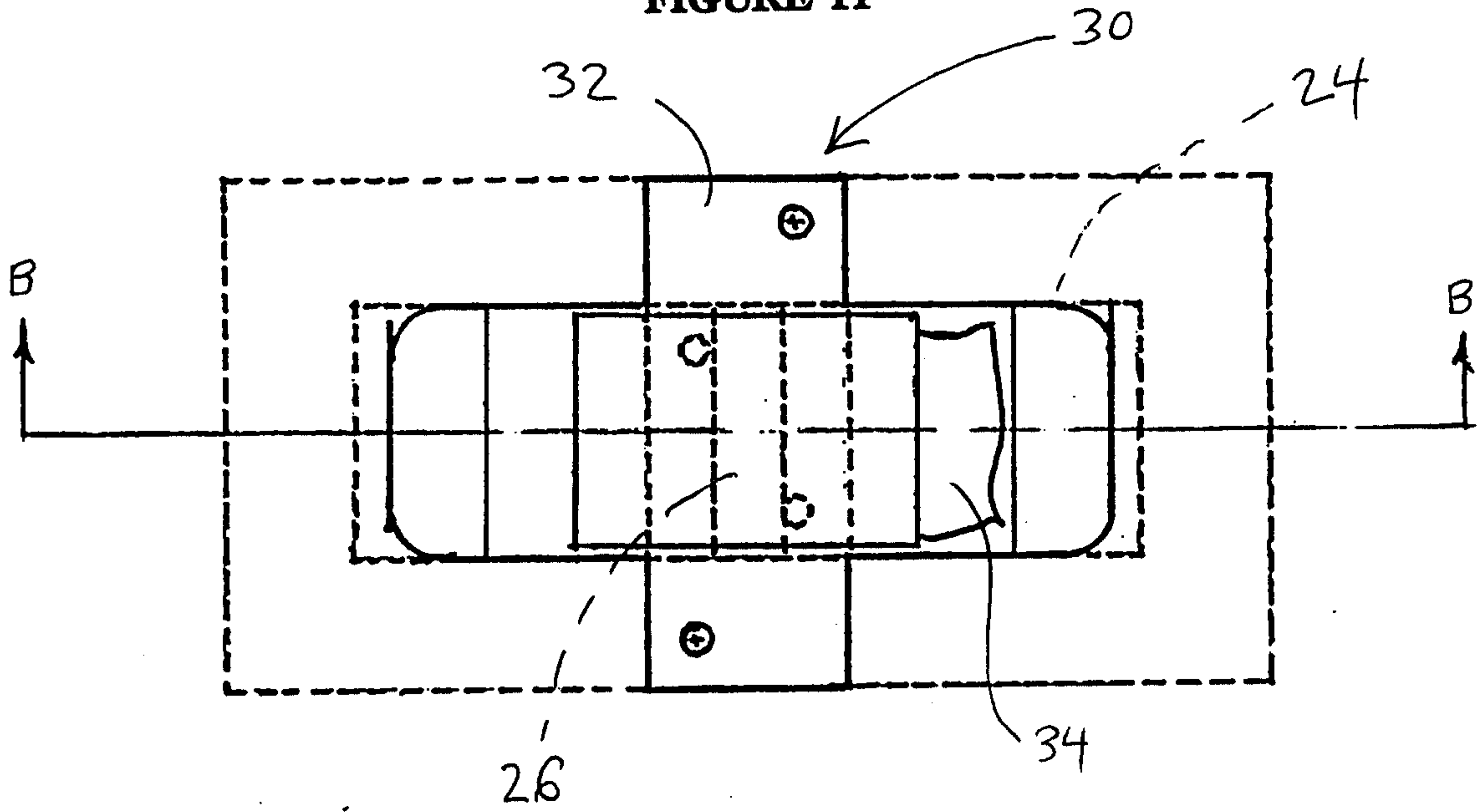


FIGURE 12

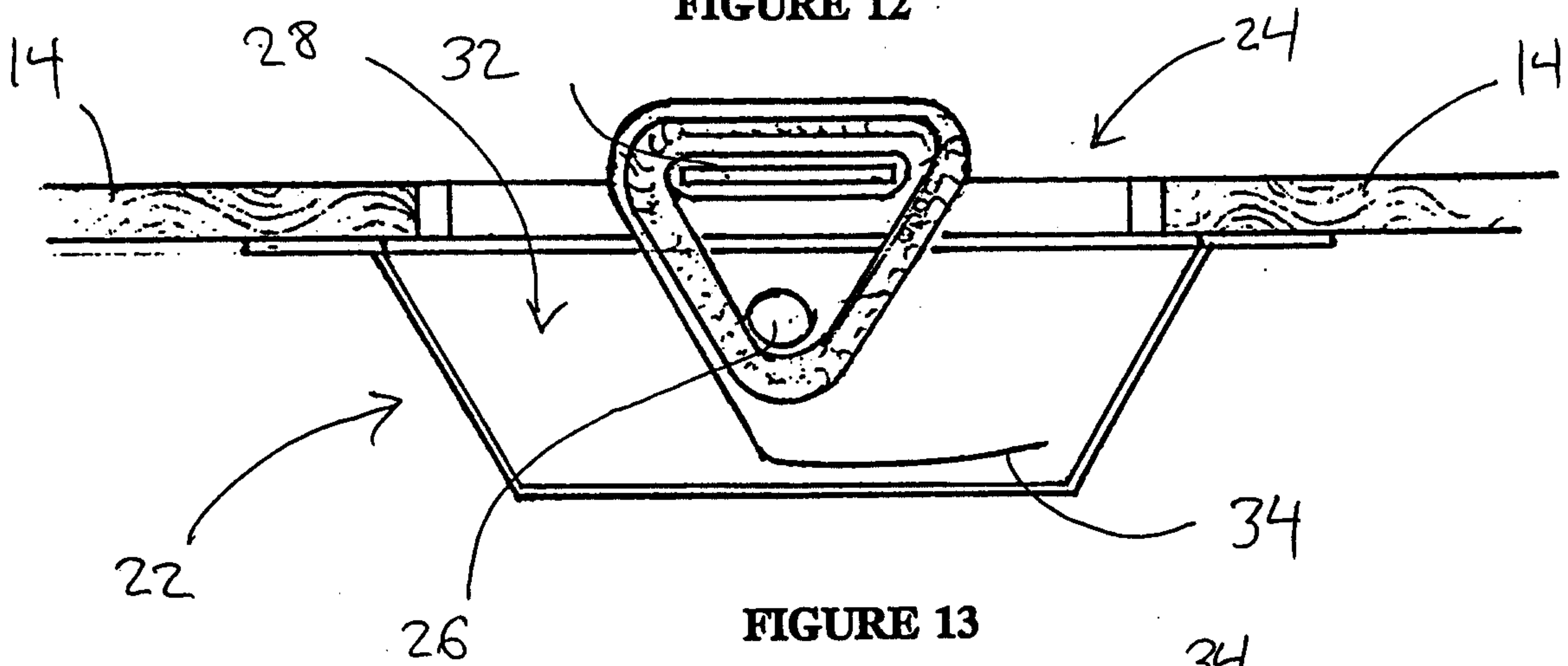
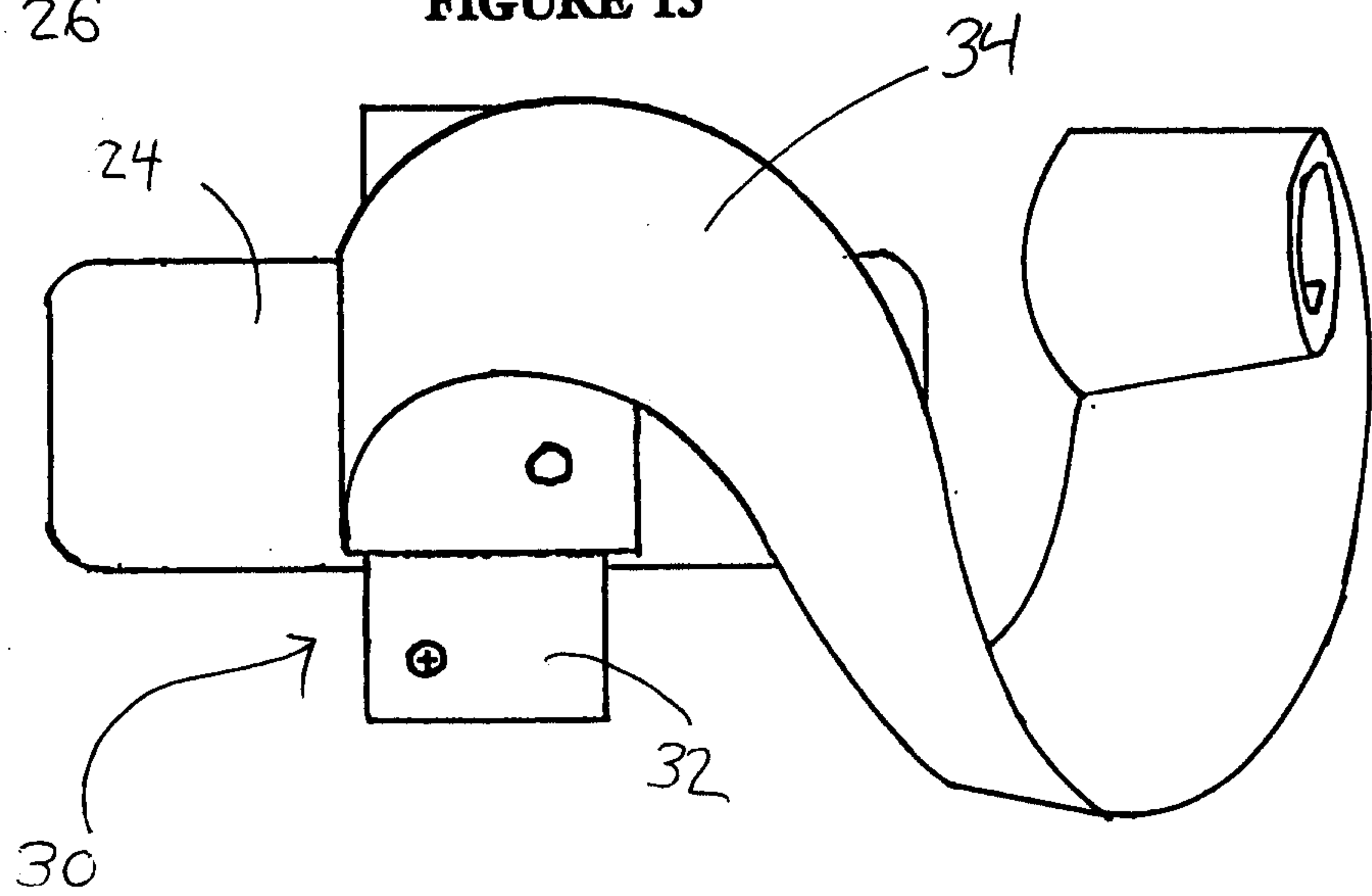


FIGURE 13



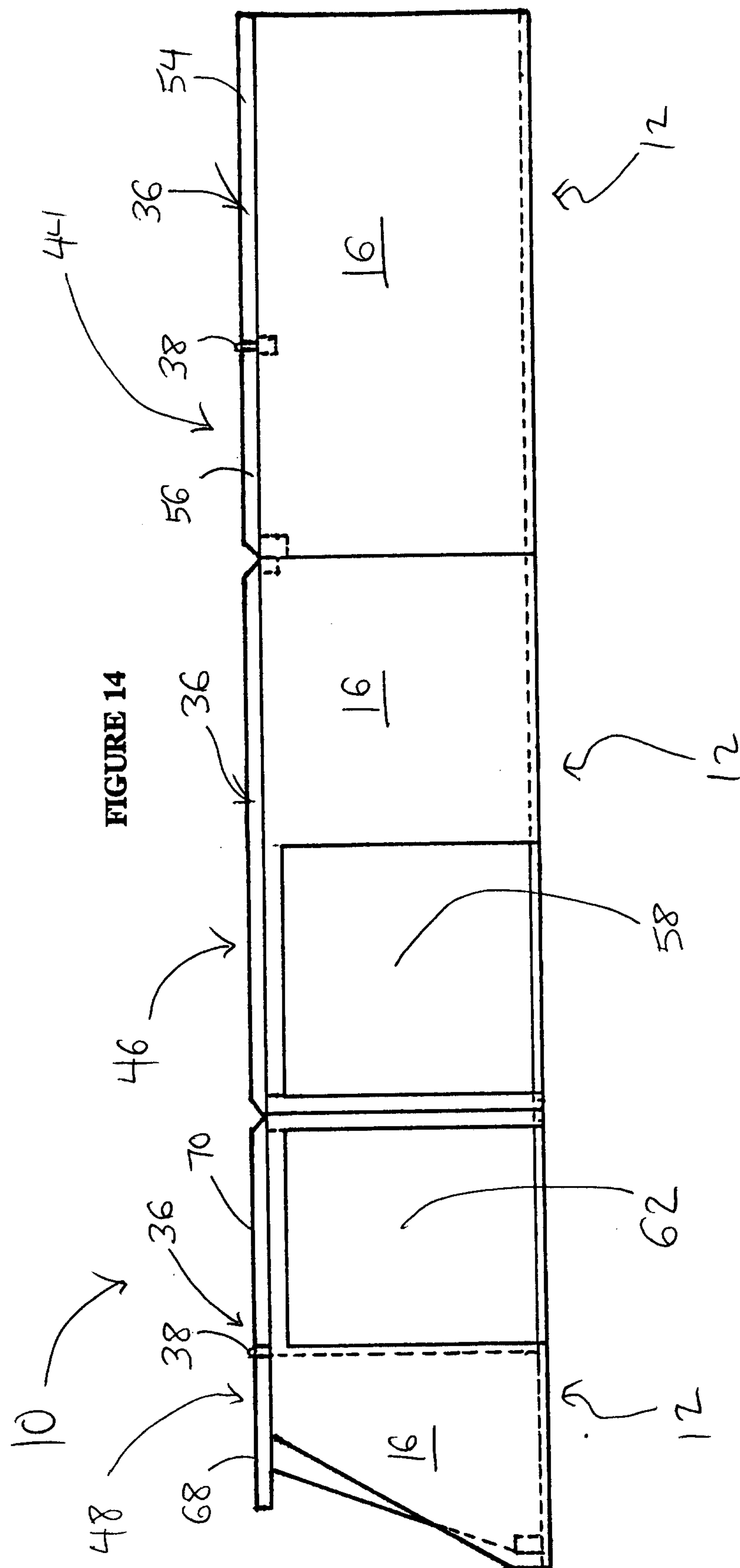


FIGURE 15

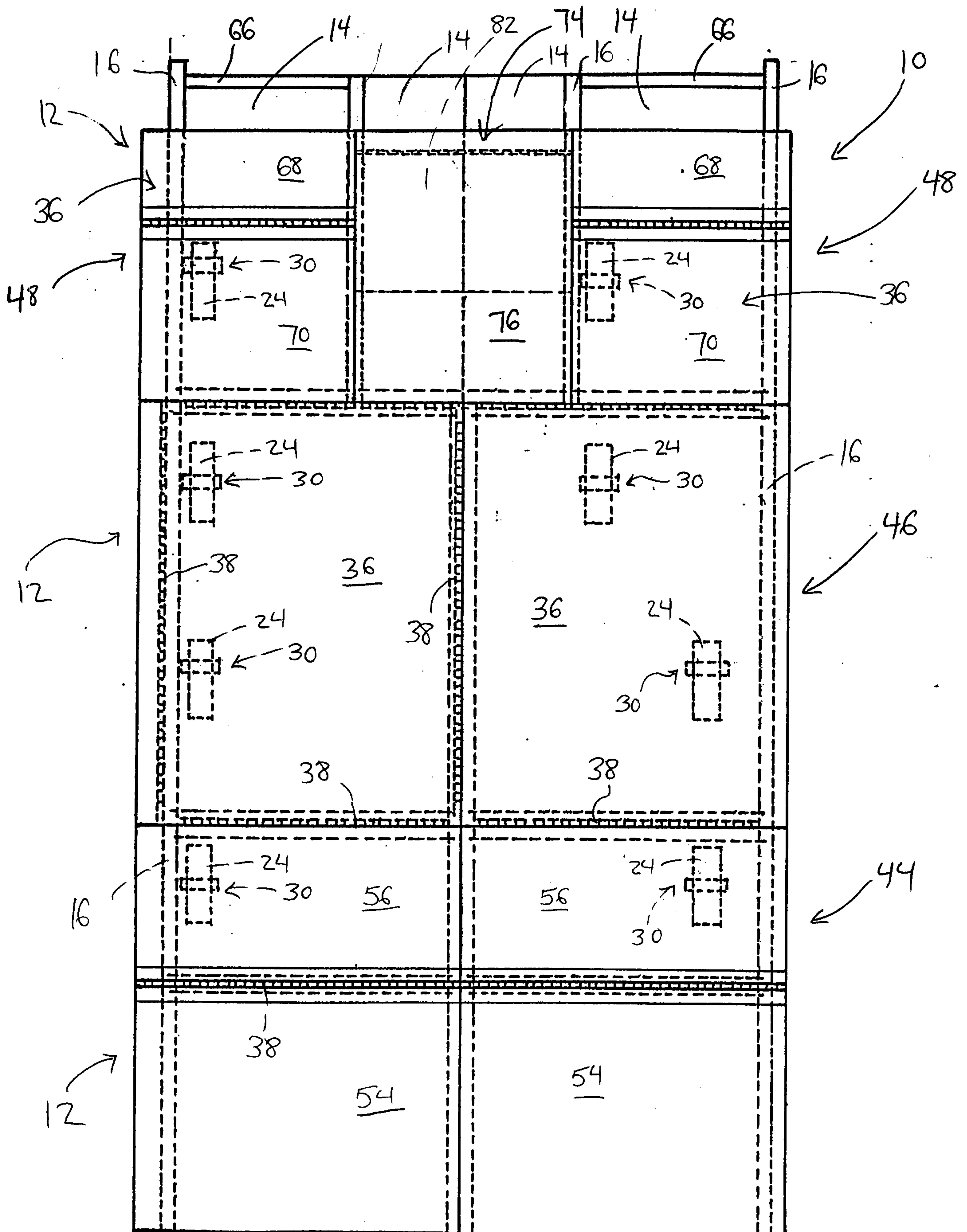
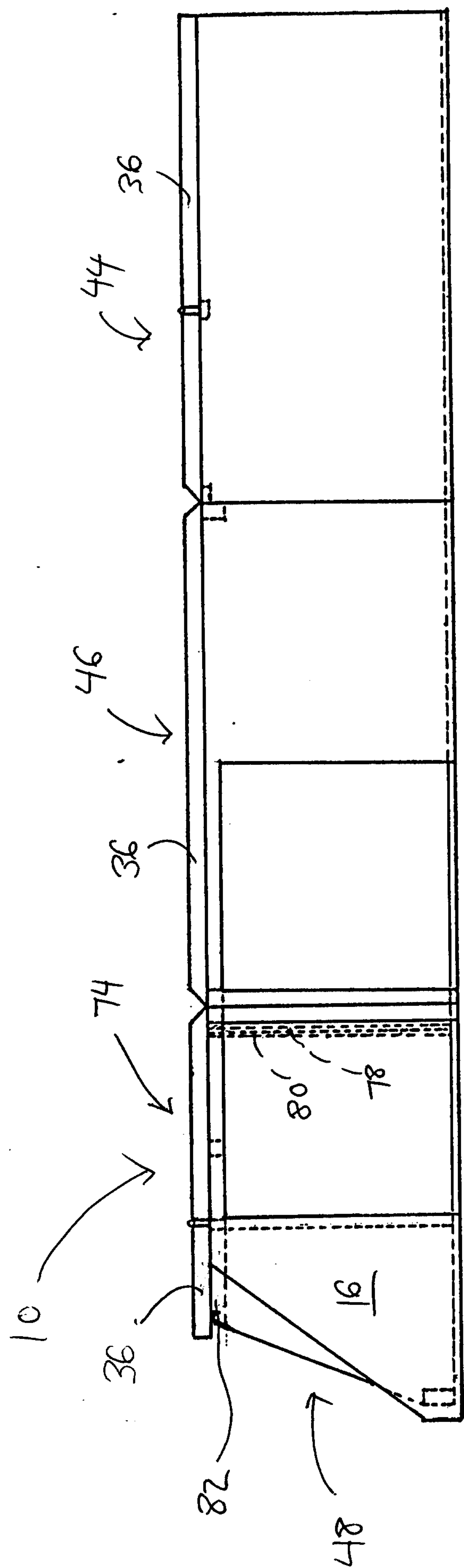


FIGURE 16



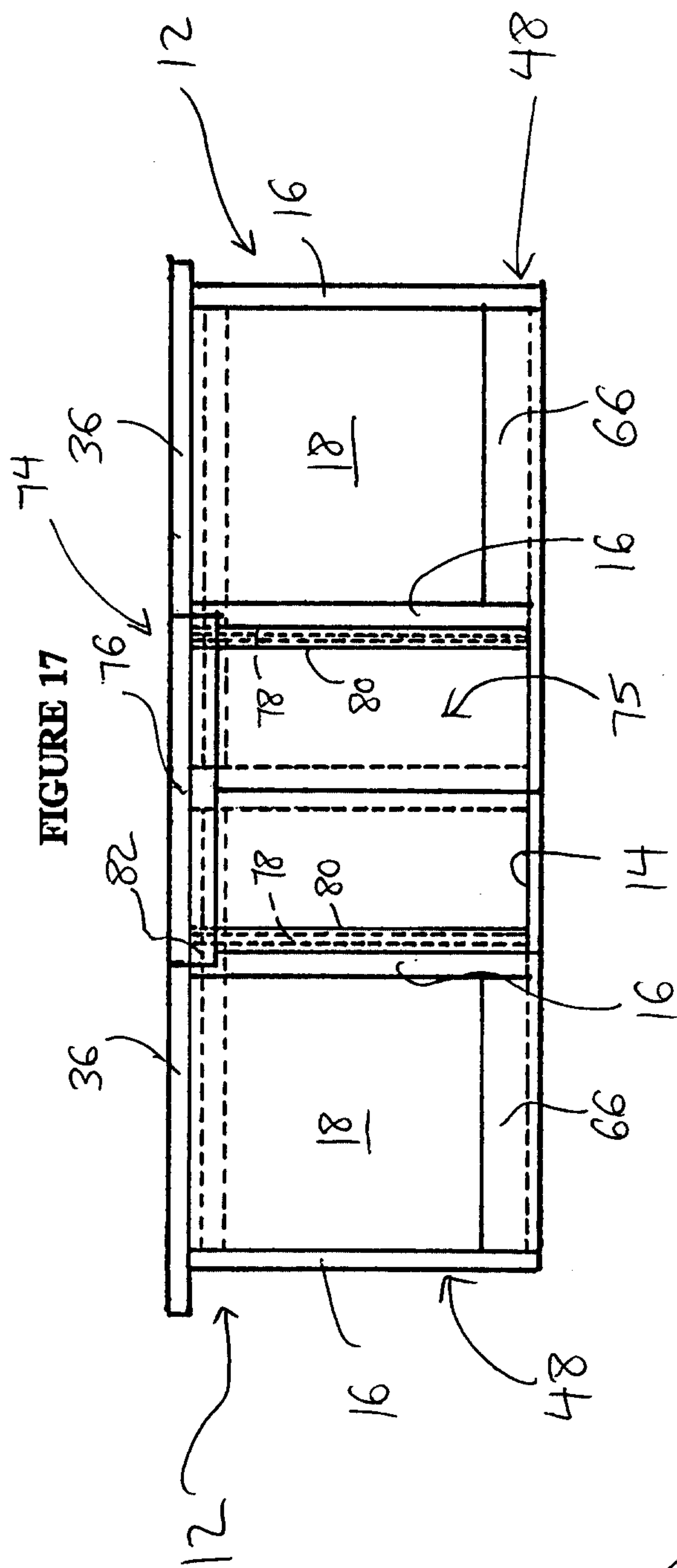


FIGURE 17

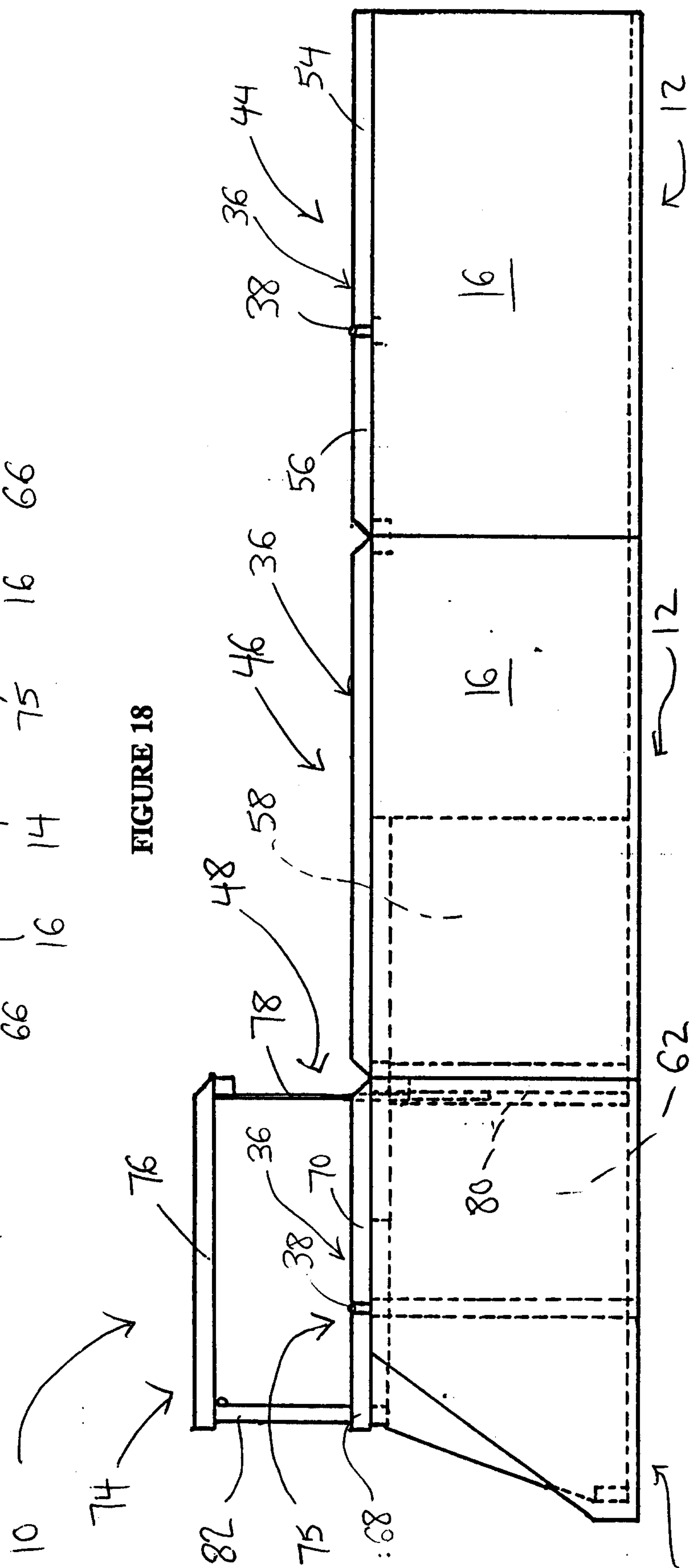


FIGURE 18

FIGURE 19

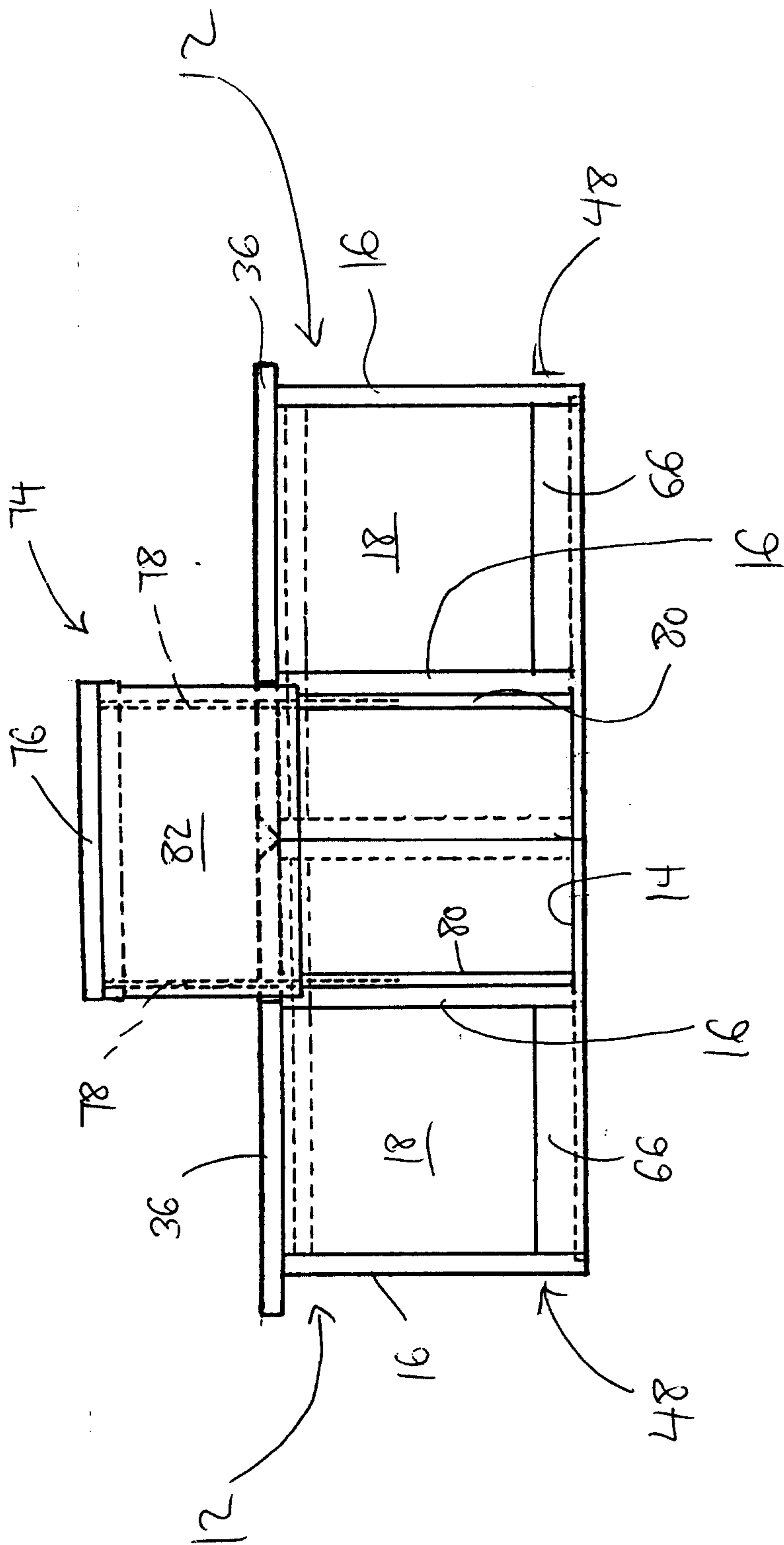


FIGURE 20

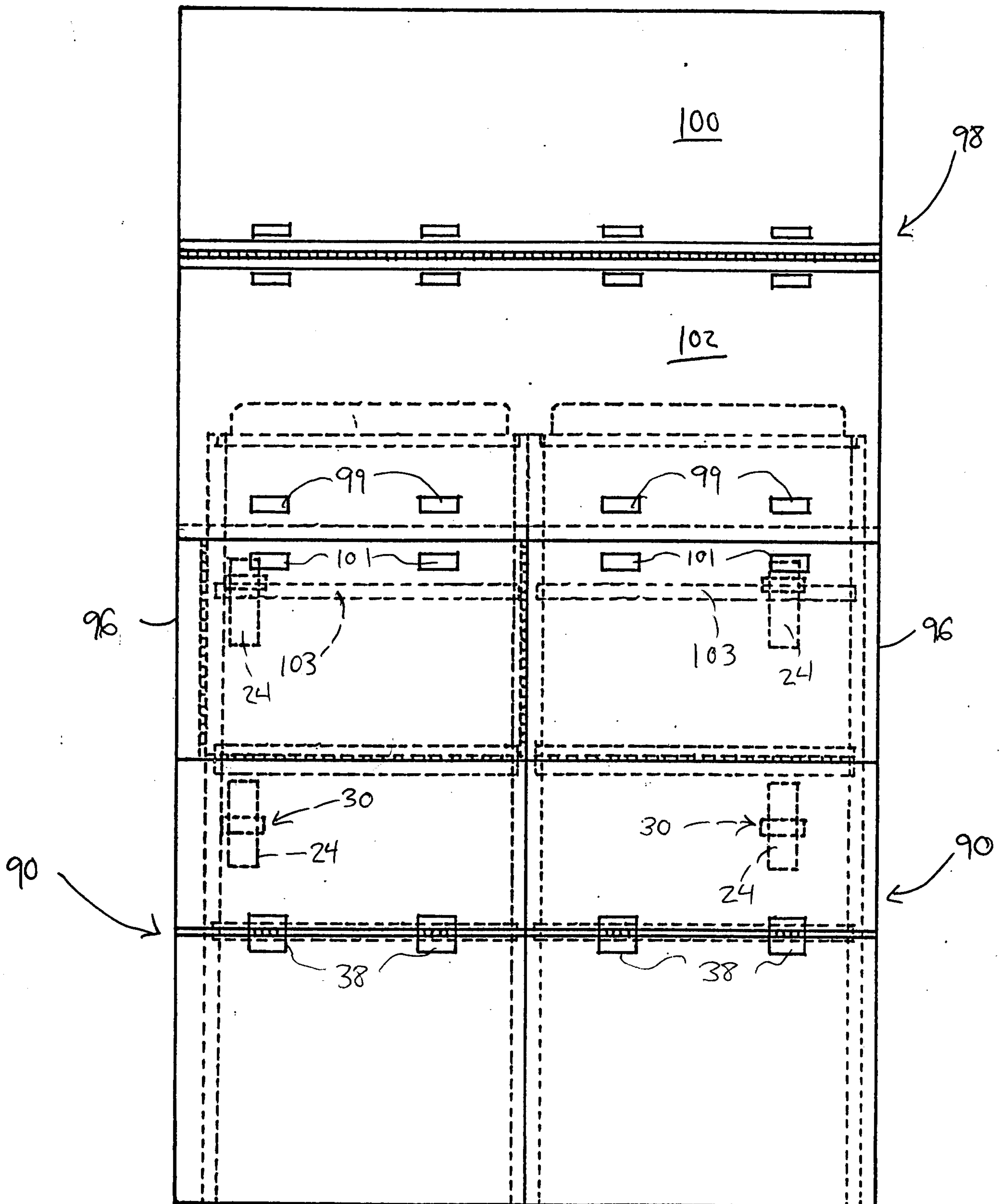


FIGURE 21

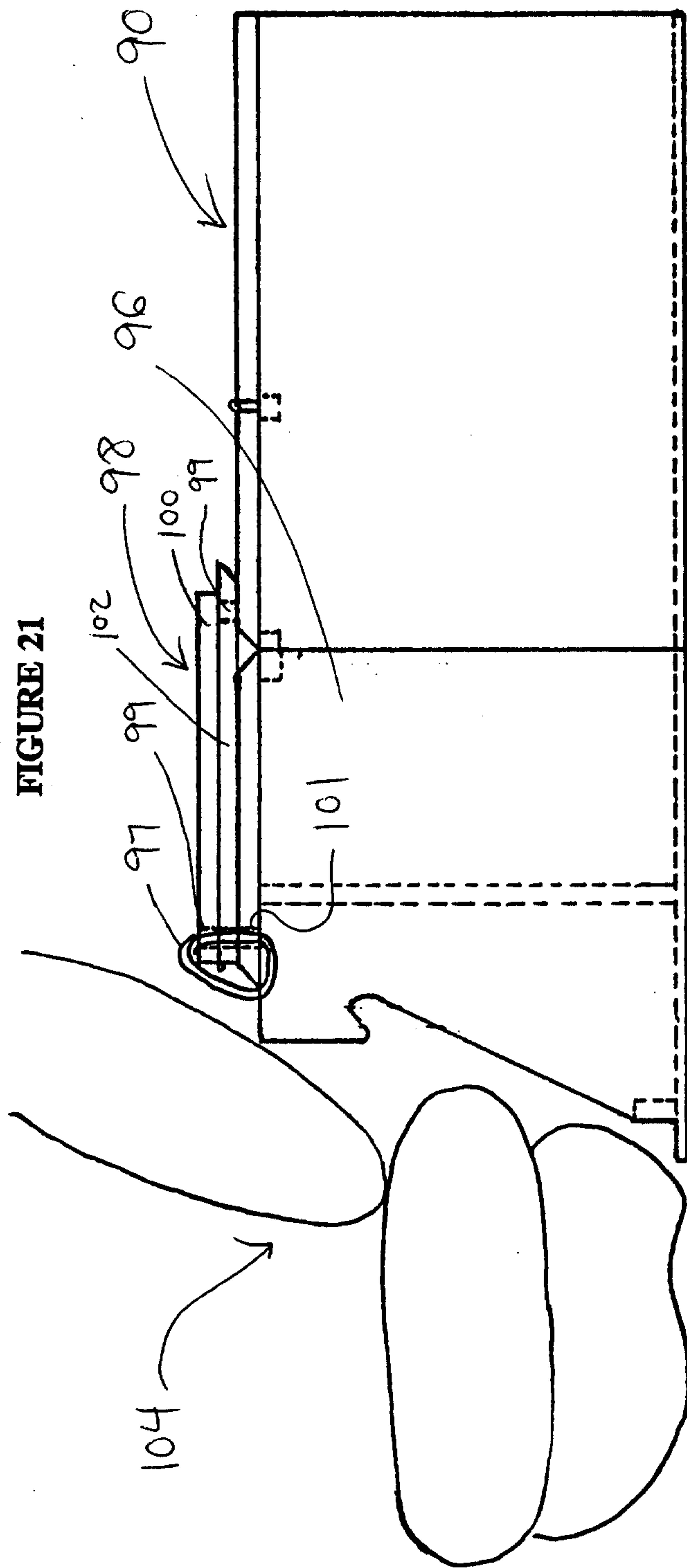


FIGURE 22

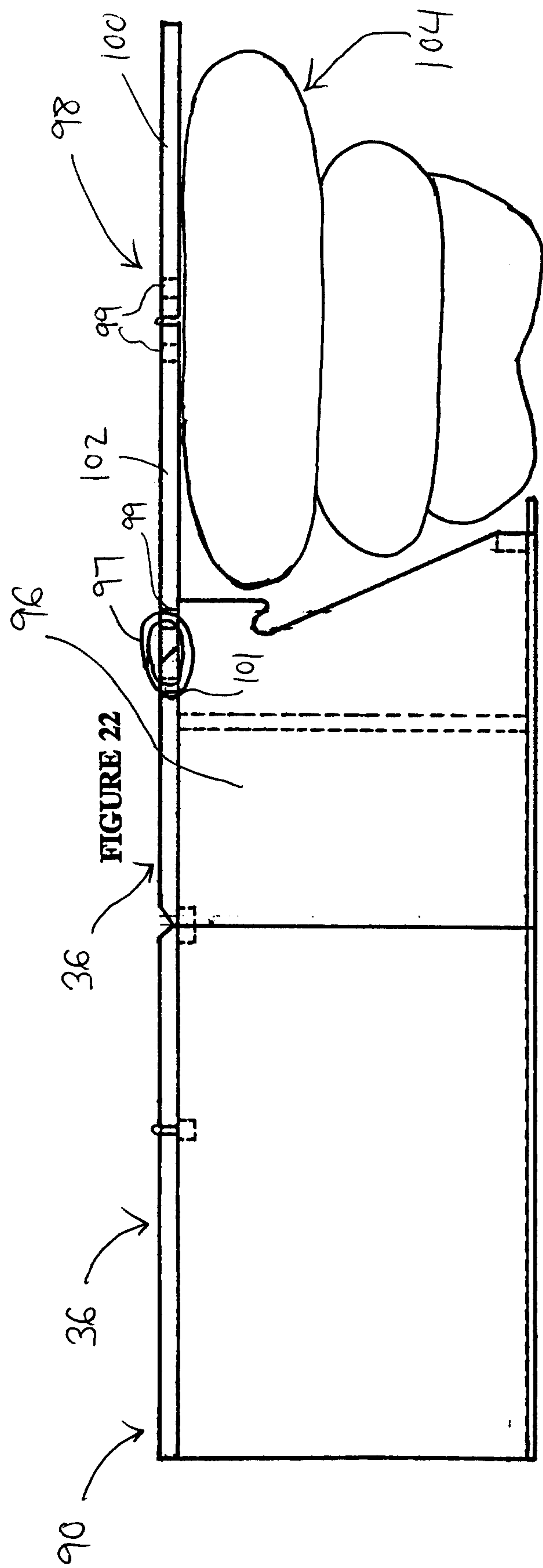


FIGURE 23

