

Nov. 10, 1959

R. L. CRABS
MAIL CARRIER

2,912,151

Filed March 20, 1957

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

FIG. 1.

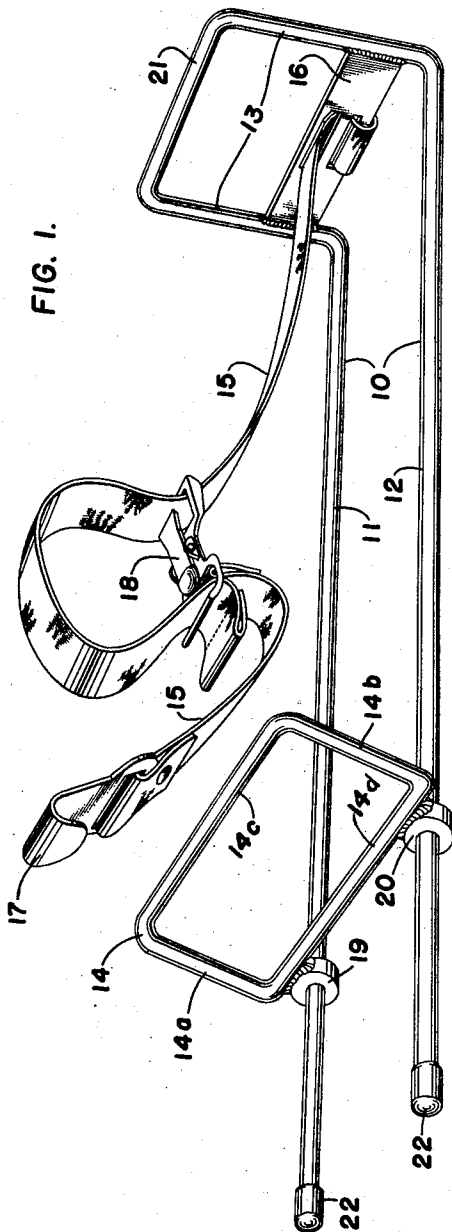
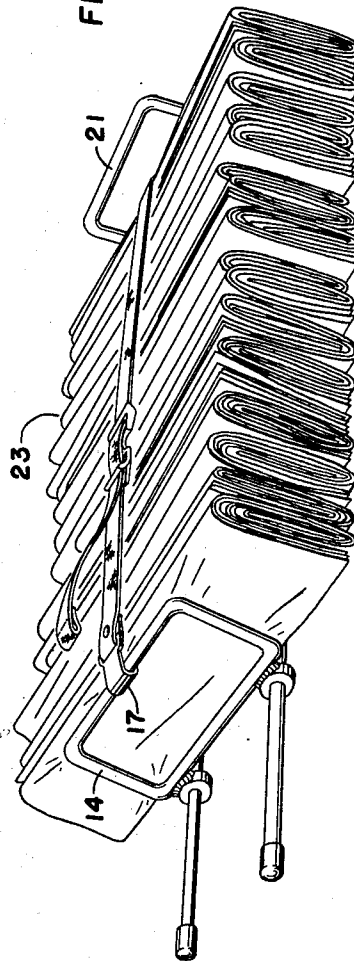


FIG. 2.



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FIG. 3.

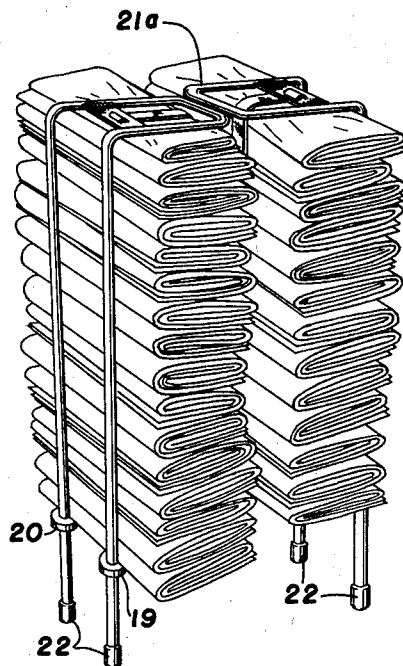
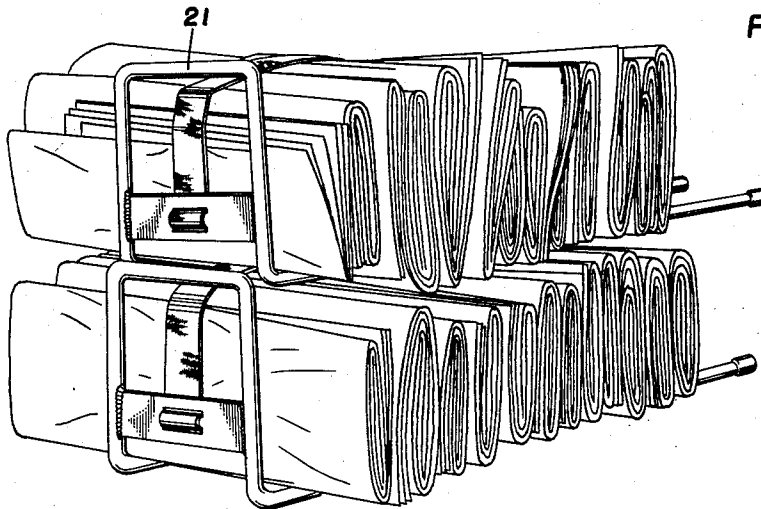


FIG. 4.



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MAIL CARRIER

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1 Claim. (Cl. 224—50)

This invention relates to means for carrying and dispensing mail or the like. More particularly, it provides a device to facilitate the handling and delivery of mail by rural carriers or mounted city carriers.

Pedestrian mail carriers normally use either the conventional mail pouch or carry the mail in bundles tied by straps. Both of these methods are slow and awkward for a mounted carrier, who must carry a considerable amount of mail in his vehicle and arrange it for rapid withdrawal and delivery. The mail pouch requires that the mail be handled flat, and it is harder to get at the mail and more time-consuming to deliver it. Strap-tied bundles must be handled very carefully to keep the mail from slipping within the bundle or out of it. Most mounted carriers use straps to tie the mail, folded with letters and other small matter inside the fold, making either a flat bundle or a rolled bundle, but it is awkward to dispense mail from these strap-tied bundles, no matter whether a flat or rolled bundle is used.

To overcome the disadvantages of prior art devices and methods of packing, carrying, withdrawing and dispensing mail, it is an object of my invention to provide a lightweight, rigid carrier of novel structure in which mail can be placed in convenient, stacked array, firmly secured for carrying from the post office to the vehicle, and there placed in convenient position on the seat beside the driver, the mail being held securely in place, yet quickly and easily removable for delivery. Another object is to provide a carrier which will readily stack with other similar carriers either in the filled or empty condition. Another object is to provide a carrier adapted for maximum ease of carrying, either alone or with another similar carrier supported by the same hand. Another object is to provide a carrier which, when filled with mail, will stand on its end in face-to-face relationship with another similarly filled carrier.

Other objects and advantages of my invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from the following description and the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a view in perspective of a mail carrier made in accordance with my invention before being loaded with mail;

Fig. 2 is a similar view of the same to a smaller scale, with a batch of mail loaded therein;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view showing a pair of the same carriers, partially loaded, as they appear when rested on their ends facing each other, ready to be lifted and carried as a pair; and

Fig. 4 is a view in perspective showing two of the carriers, similarly loaded, stacked one on top of the other, horizontally disposed on a flat surface.

Referring now to the drawings, wherein like characters designate the same or similar parts, there is shown one embodiment of my novel mail carrier comprising an elongate base member 10, which consists of a pair of parallel runners, in this case parallel rods 11 and 12, rigidly connected at one end by an upstanding fixed jaw 13, and a movable jaw 14 slidably mounted on rods 11 and

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12. A flexible strap 15 is fixed at one end to a cross member portion 16 of fixed jaw 13 and provided at its other end with a hook 17 adapted to be hooked to movable jaw 14. Strap 15 is made of two sections of strap, preferably of web material, connected by a buckle 18 by means of which the effective length of strap 15 may be adjusted.

As will be apparent from Fig. 1, base 10 and fixed jaw 13 are formed from a single length of rod or tube stock plus cross-piece 16. Three-eighth inch steel or aluminum rod is suitable. The rod is first bent into rectangular U-shape in one plane with portions 11 and 12 spaced properly. A five inch spacing is preferred, which is wide enough to span mail of minimum width. Then jaw portion 13 is bent up until substantially perpendicular to rod portions 11 and 12, with the top portion 21 about six inches above rails 11 and 12, to form a handle slightly above the top of mail stacked edgewise on rails 11 and 12, as explained below. A cross piece 16, formed suitably for attaching one end of strap 15, is then welded in place across the upstanding legs of jaw 13.

Movable jaw 14 is slidably mounted on rods 11 and 12 with a loose fit which permits it to tilt about the portions connecting it with rods 11 and 12 through a limited arc toward and away from fixed jaw 13. When tilted to an intermediate angle it may be slid freely along the rods, but when tilted to either limit of tilt it jams tightly to the rods. Jaw 14 has a top or load engaging portion 14c spaced at such a distance above rods 11 and 12 that it will engage mail of average height stacked edgewise on rods 11 and 12, as illustrated in Fig. 2. Preferably, portion 14c is closer to fixed jaw 13 than the portions 19 and 20 connecting it to rods 11 and 12, at all angles of tilt within the limited arc mentioned. Thus, when a load, such as stacked folded newspapers 23, is placed on rods 11 and 12, slidable jaw 14 may be forced against the load to press it against fixed jaw 13 and, in doing this, jaw 14 will be tilted until it jams fast on rods 11 and 12, thereby firmly clamping the load in the carrier. To describe the illustrated embodiment in more detail, movable jaw 14 is preferably of rectangular configuration, in the form of a loop three and a half inches high and five and one-half inches wide of rod or tube material like that of part 10, with sides 14a and 14b, top 14c and bottom 14d, and it is slidably mounted on rods 11 and 12 by means of sleeves or apertured portions 19 and 20 which are welded to the bottom of the loop. With these dimensions, top or load engaging portion 14c is roughly three and one-half inches above rods 11 and 12. The sleeves 19 and 20 have apertures slightly larger than the diameters of rods 11 and 12. For example, for a rod diameter of three-eighths of an inch, the sleeves may have cylindrical apertures thirteen-thirty-seconds of an inch in diameter and about three-eighths of an inch long (the sleeve length). This provides a loose fit of jaw 14 on rods 11 and 12 such that jaw 14 may be slid easily therealong provided the axes of the apertures are parallel to the axes of the rods. But jaw 14, because of the loose fit, is tiltable through a limited arc about apertured portions 19 and 20, and when tilted to the limit of this arc jaw 14 jams firmly to the rods, as explained above.

In order to provide a load engaging portion, such as portion 14c, which in the preferred embodiment is always closer to fixed jaw 13 than apertured portions 19 and 20, portions 19 and 20 are welded to the bottom 14d of jaw 14 with an angle of less than ninety degrees between the plane of loop 14a-b-c-d and the plane defined by the axes of the apertures through members 19 and 20. An angle of seventy degrees is preferred. Thus, when jaw 14 is slidably mounted on rods 11 and 12, as illustrated in Fig. 1, it inclines toward fixed jaw 13.

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As explained above and shown clearly in Fig. 2, the carrier is provided with a handle portion 21 by extending jaw 13 upwardly from rods 11 and 12 sufficiently higher than the top of movable jaw 14, so as to provide a handle above the load 23. This is a very convenient feature of my invention, as explained below.

As explained above, slidable jaw 14 may be pressed against a load, such as a stacked load of mail 23, and the load thus clamped in the carrier. This may be done without the use of a strap such as 15. That is, the strap may be omitted, and the load carried by the handle. When carrying a loaded carrier, however, there is danger that the center of the load may be knocked away from rods 11 and 12 by an accidental blow. In the illustrated embodiment strap means 15 is provided to prevent this, and Figs. 2, 3 and 4 show how it holds the load securely against rods 11 and 12 for hand carrying.

With strap 15 tightened as illustrated in Fig. 2, the jamming action of sleeves 19 and 20 on rods 11 and 12 is not necessary, strap 15 in this condition drawing jaw 14 against the load. As will be apparent from this, it is not essential that jaw 14 be inclined toward the load, as described above for the preferred embodiment, provided the strap is used to pull jaw 14 tightly against the load.

Hook 17 may be attached to the bottom member 14d, instead of to 14c as illustrated in Fig. 2. It will also be apparent that the hook end may be permanently attached to slidable jaw 14, and buckle 18 used to join the two portions of strap 15.

Rubber knobs 22 preferably are provided on the ends of rods 11 and 12.

As illustrated in Fig. 3 a pair of loaded carriers may be stood up on their ends in face to face relationship with their handles together as at 21a. The loads may be deeper, for example, as illustrated in Fig. 4. At any rate, a pair of loaded carriers arranged as illustrated in Fig. 3 may conveniently be lifted by one hand. Thus one man may carry four loaded carriers with ease.

A plurality of loaded carriers may be stacked one on top of the other, each disposed horizontally. Figure 4 illustrates two carriers so stacked, as viewed from the back or handle end 21.

In use, one or more of the carriers may be placed on the seat beside the mail man in a fashion similar to that illustrated in Fig. 4 but with the slidable clamp ends 14 toward him. He throws the strap 15 of the first or top

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carrier out of the way and slacks off clamp 14 slightly. He may then quickly remove mail from the top carrier as required for delivery and push clamp 14 along toward fixed end 13 as required to take up the slack and hold the batch of mail together.

Emptied carriers may be nested under a filled or empty carrier simply by pushing clamp 14 thereof in against fixed end 13.

It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that I have provided a most convenient means for packing, carrying, and dispensing mail. The structure is simple, rugged, and novel. Other embodiments are possible within the scope of the appended claim.

I claim as my invention:

15 A carrier for a load of stacked mail or the like, comprising a single long rod shaped into two elongate parallel runners which form the bottom of said carrier, each runner terminating in an end of said rod, and a connecting fixed jaw portion upstanding from the ends of said runners remote from the ends of said rod, said fixed jaw portion comprising two arms upstanding respectively from the two runners and a handle portion joining the upper ends of said arms, a movable jaw opposed to said fixed jaw slidably mounted at its bottom on said runners and having a load engaging portion at its top, said handle portion being spaced from said runners a greater distance than said load engaging portion, a tie-down strap, means for attaching said strap to said fixed jaw below the height of said load engaging portion of said movable jaw, said means comprising a cross bar connecting said arms below said handle portion, said runners being closer to said cross bar than to said load engaging portion, said cross bar having a strap-attaching means for attaching one end of said strap to it, and means on another end of said strap for attaching the latter to said load engaging portion of the movable jaw.

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