May 9, 1961 B. M. HOTCHKISS 2,983,024

CASKET UNIT

Filed May 13, 1959 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

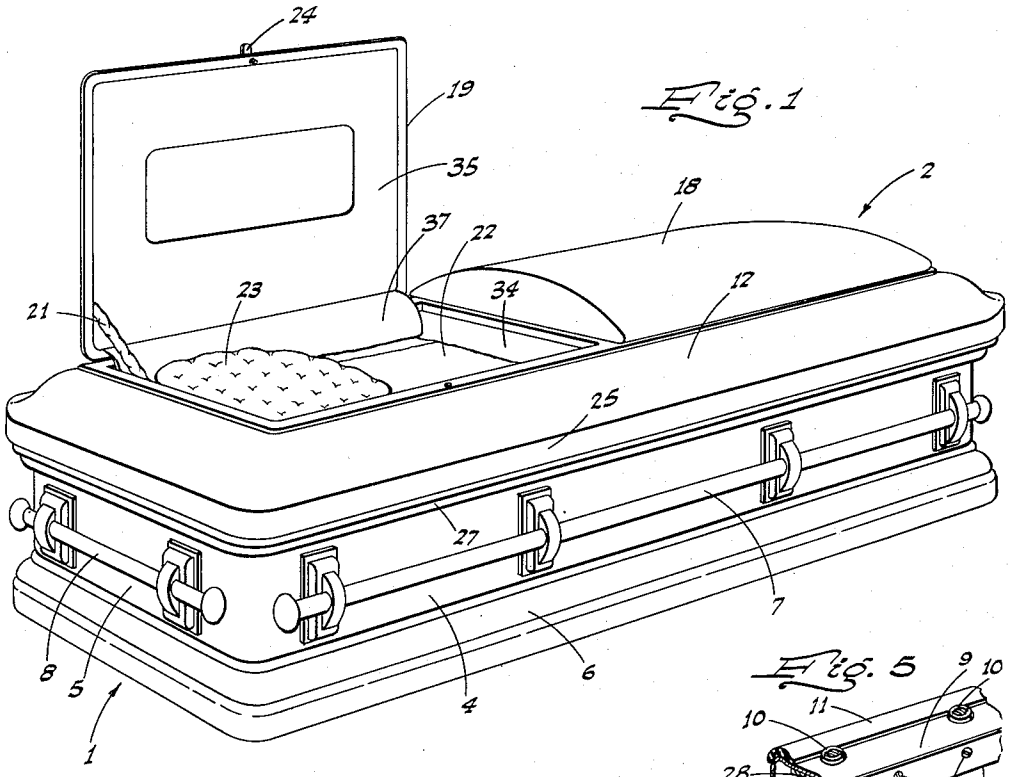


Fig. 1

Fig. 5

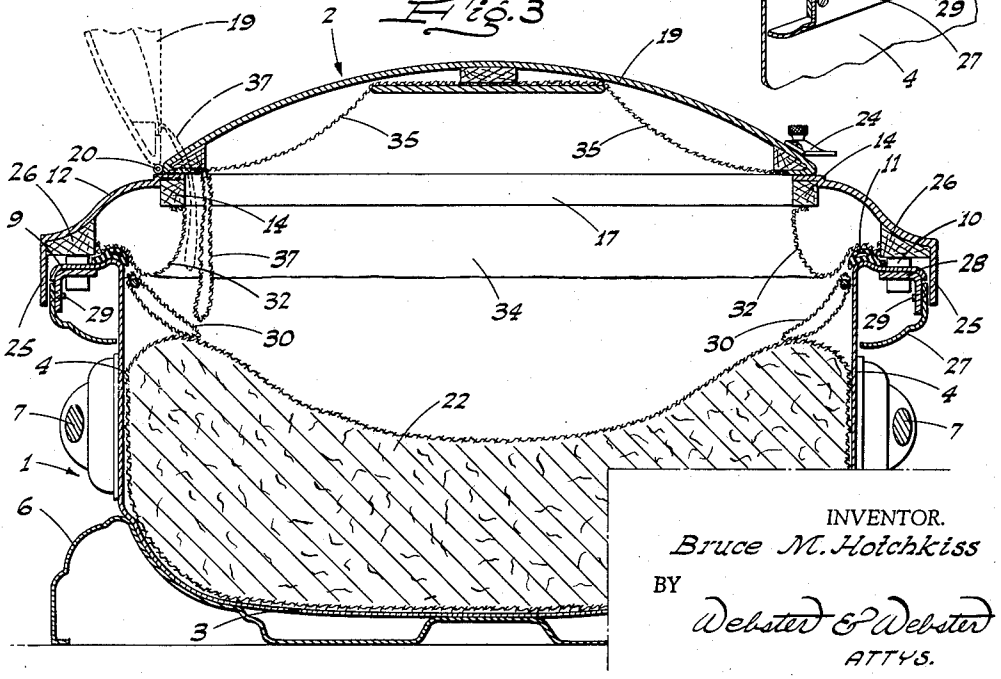


Fig. 3

INVENTOR.
Bruce M. Hotchkiss
BY
Webster & Webster
ATTYS.

May 9, 1961 B. M. HOTCHKISS 2,983,024

CASKET UNIT

Filed May 13, 1959 2 Sheets-Sheet 2

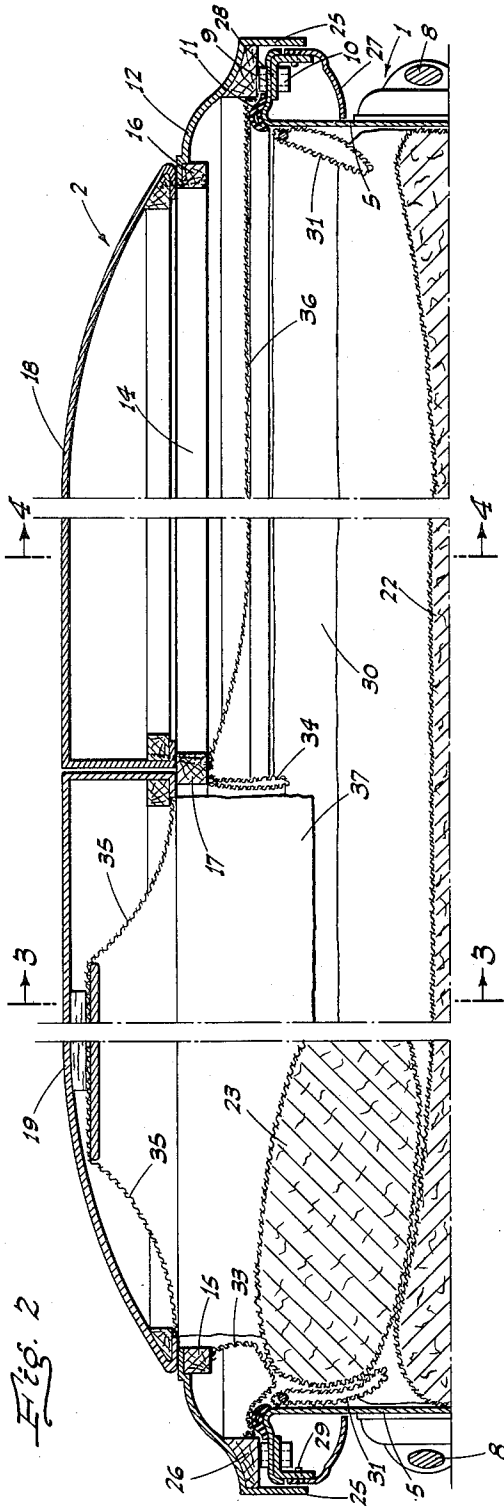


Fig. 2

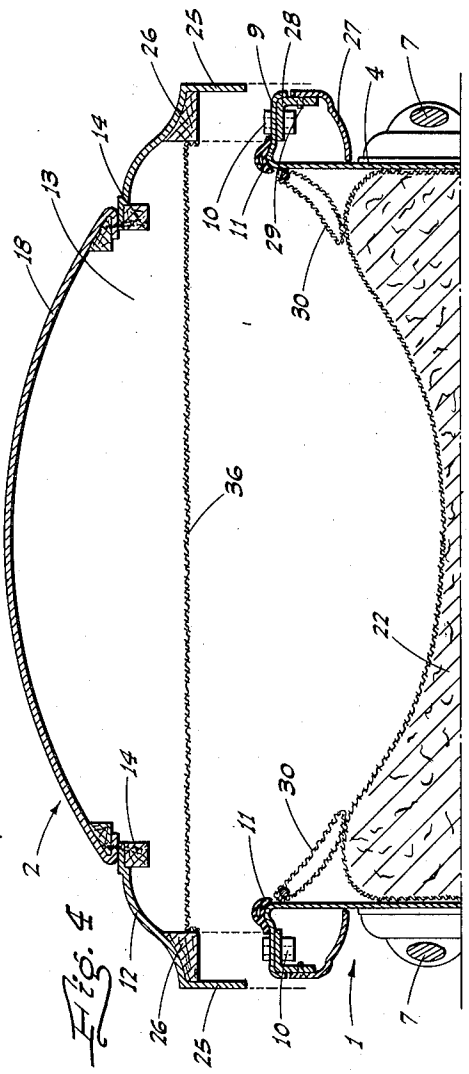


Fig. 4

INVENTOR.
Bruce M. Hotchkiss
BY
Webster & Webster
ATTYS.

United States Patent Office 2,983,024 Patented May 9, 1961

2,983,024

CASKET UNIT

Bruce M. Hotchkiss, 5 W. Highland Ave., Tracy, Calif., assignor of one-half to Clarence H. McKinley, Hollywood, Calif.

Filed May 13, 1959, Ser. No. 812,837

2 Claims. (Cl. 27—17)

This invention relates in general to an improvement in a casket unit.

In particular, the invention is directed to, and it is a major object to provide, a casket unit which comprises —in combination—an initially open-top casket and a temporary and freely manually removable, ornamental top or viewing panel engaged on the casket for the period of the funeral service. Thereafter, and before the actual burial, the ornamental top or viewing panel is removed and a strictly functional, less expensive, one-piece burial top is applied to the casket. In this way the ornamental top or viewing panel, which is naturally of expensive nature, can be used over and over by the mortuary, with resultant substantial reduction in the cost to the public of the casket.

The initially open-top casket is of a type which has a plurality of exposed and visible connecting elements spaced about its rim adapted for use in securing the burial top to said casket; it being another important object of this invention to provide the temporary and removable, ornamental top or viewing panel with a skirt arrangement which encompasses or shields such elements from view whereby the casket unit, at the burial services, has a conventional appearance.

An additional object of the invention is to provide a temporary and removable, ornamental top or viewing panel—for the purpose described—wherein said skirt arrangement, as in the preceding paragraph, not only serves to shield the connecting elements from view but also locates said viewing panel on the casket in proper position and against accidental lateral displacement; the viewing panel being removable from the casket only by upward movement.

A further object of the invention is to provide the casket and the viewing panel each with separate drapes or lining so that the viewing panel is freely removable from the casket; the drapes or lining in the viewing panel being arranged so that they do not at all contact the body in the casket, or require any tucking-in after placement of said panel on the casket.

It is also an object of the invention to provide a casket unit which includes a temporary and removable, ornamental top or viewing panel designed for relative ease of manufacture, practical and convenient use, and long or repeated service while remaining in the best of condition.

These objects are accomplished by means of such structure and relative arrangement of parts as will fully appear by perusal of the following specification and claims:

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the casket unit; the temporary or removable, ornamental top or viewing panel being shown in place on the casket, with the upper section of said panel open as at the funeral service.

Fig. 2 is a longitudinal sectional elevation of the

casket unit as in Fig. 1 but with said upper section closed.

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

Fig. 4 is a transverse section on line 4—4 of Fig. 2 but shows the viewing panel as lifted clear of the casket for removal therefrom.

Fig. 5 is a fragmentary perspective view of the lip of the casket, showing certain of the connecting elements which are covered by the viewing panel when the latter is in use.

Referring now more particularly to the drawings and to the characters of reference marked thereon, the casket unit comprises an initially open-top casket indicated generally at **1**, and a temporary and removable, ornamental top or viewing panel indicated generally at **2**; the latter providing essentially a closure for said casket.

The casket **1** includes a bottom **3**, sides **4**, and ends **5**; the casket being supported by a unitary elongated base or pedestal **6**. Side handles **7** and end handles **8** are secured exteriorly on the casket.

A substantially horizontal, laterally outwardly projecting lip **9** is formed in connection with the upper edges of the sides **4** and ends **5**, and extends unbroken or continuous about the entire casket. A multiplicity of spaced boss-like connecting elements **10** are mounted on and upstand from the lip **9**, all about the casket; i.e. along both sides and both ends. Additionally, the lip **9** supports—inwardly of the connecting elements **10**—a continuous upwardly facing seal **11**; such seal at the top being disposed in a higher plane than the upper ends of the connecting elements **10**, which elements all have equal projection above the lip **9**.

The connecting elements **10** and the seal **11** are for the primary purpose of securing a strictly functional, non-ornamental burial top on the casket in sealed relation; such top having cooperating parts engaging in holding relation with said elements **10**. The aforesaid burial top (which forms no part of the present invention) is not shown.

The temporary and removable, ornamental top or viewing panel **2** is used on the casket **1** solely for the purpose of the funeral service and thereafter such viewing panel **2** is removed and retained for re-use subsequently; the aforementioned burial top then being applied to the casket preparatory to interment.

The temporary top or viewing panel **2** is comprised of a marginal cover **12** adapted to substantially matchingly engage atop the casket **1**; such marginal cover **12** defining a central elongated rectangular opening **13** framed by side bars **14**, a head cross bar **15**, a foot cross bar **16**, and intermediate cross bar **17**.

The opening **13**—as thus framed—is embraced by a transversely arched lower cover section **18** and a transversely arched upper cover section **19**; the section **18** being fixed while the section **19** is hinged as at **20**, for opening to the position shown in Fig. 1 and wherein said upper section **19** is maintained in a predetermined position by a holding element **21**. With the upper cover section **19** in its opened position, the panel **2** provides a half-length display of the body in the casket; the latter including the usual couch **22** and pillow **23**. When the upper cover section **19** is closed, it is releasably secured in such position by latch **24**.

In order to support the top or viewing panel **2** on the casket **1** in freely vertically manually removable relation while maintaining said panel **2** located against relative lateral displacement, the following arrangement is provided:

The marginal cover **12**, which laps the lip **9**, is formed—at its periphery—with a continuous depending flange or skirt **25**, and immediately inwardly of such

flange or skirt there is fixed on the underside of said marginal cover **12** a flat bottom rib **26** which extends all about the panel **2**; i.e. is co-extensive with and is disposed immediately above the lip **9**.

When the top or viewing panel **2** is disposed on the casket **1**, the flange or skirt **25** depends adjacent but outwardly of the lip **9** and terminates in a plane therebelow. This effectively locates said panel **2** against accidental lateral displacement but without in the least obstructing free manual removal vertically of said panel from the casket; the flat bottom rib **26** resting on top of the connecting elements **10** and such rib **26** being dimensioned and disposed so that it lies clear of the seal **11**. It is desirable—for the purpose of stability of the panel **2**—that the rib **26** not engage or rest on said seal **11**.

A longitudinally continuous, downwardly and inwardly extending fascia **27** is carried by the lip **9**, and such fascia is attached to said lip by a right angle member or strip **28**, with securing screws **29** between the upper portion of the fascia and the adjacent part of said strip **28**. The screws **29** are initially visually exposed, and the depending flange or skirt **25** serves the further purpose of shielding not only the connecting elements **10** but also the screws **29** from side view when the top or viewing panel **2** is in place on the casket, and so that the casket unit then presents a conventional appearance.

The casket **1** and the top or viewing panel **2** each are provided with separate lining and drapes so that said panel can be removed from the casket without the necessity of any drape or lining detachment.

More particularly, the casket **1** includes side drapes **30** and end drapes **31**, all rod-supported as shown, and none of which extend above the plane of the top of the casket.

The top or viewing panel **2** is provided therein with side drapes **32**, and an end drape **33** at the head of the panel, and an intermediate transverse drape **34** which depends from the cross bar **17**. Additionally, the upper cover section **19** is fitted within the same with a draped lining **35** while a longitudinal lining **36** extends from the cross bar **17** to the portion of the rib **26** at the foot of the panel **2**. Lastly, a curtain **37** is secured to the upper cover section **19** adjacent the hinge **20**, depending through the panel **2** and to a termination adjacent but short of the corresponding side drape **30** when said cover section **19** is closed.

By providing separate linings and drapes in the top or viewing panel **2**, not only can said panel be freely removed from the casket, but additionally the linings and drapes do not—at any time—contact the body in the casket.

With the described casket unit, the ornamental top or viewing panel **2** can—after the funeral service—be freely manually removed upwardly from the casket and stored for subsequent re-use; the strictly functional and less expensive one-piece burial top then being applied to the casket and secured thereto in sealed relation.

The cost to the buyer of the casket unit is, therefore, materially reduced, as such cost includes only that pertaining to the casket **1** and the burial top.

From the foregoing description it will be readily seen that there has been produced such a casket unit as substantially fulfills the objects of the invention, as set forth herein.

While this specification sets forth in detail the present and preferred construction of the casket unit, still in practice such deviations from such detail may be resorted to as do not form a departure from the spirit of the invention, as defined by the appended claims.

Having thus described the invention, the following is claimed as new and useful and upon which Letters Patent is desired:

1. In a casket unit, an initially open topped casket having a continuous outwardly extending lip at the top and upstanding flat-topped elements on the lip at spaced intervals for connection to a permanent burial top; a temporary upwardly removable ornamental closure panel for the casket including a continuous downwardly facing member therein to rest on the elements, and a depending flange about its side edge to extend about the lip and locate the panel relative to the casket; and a continuous seal for engagement with such permanent burial top mounted on the lip laterally inward from the elements thereon and clear of the panel member.

2. In a casket unit which includes an initially open-topped casket having an upper-edge member thereabout, and a continuous seal for engagement with a permanent burial top mounted on said member; a temporary ornamental, upwardly removable closure panel for the casket, means on the panel at its lower edge removably supporting said panel on said member in laterally outward and clearance relation to the seal, and additional means on the panel engageable with the casket to locate the panel on the casket and prevent lateral inward movement of said panel and the first named means on the casket member.

References Cited in the file of this patent

UNITED STATES PATENTS

684,769	Drennan	Oct. 15, 1901
1,170,020	Thornton	Feb. 1, 1916
1,234,470	Hartman	July 24, 1917
2,582,841	McEwan	Jan. 15, 1952