United States Patent [19]

Bassett

[11] **3,871,523**

[45] **Mar. 18, 1975**

[54] **AUXILIARY COMPARTMENT FOR A LUNCH BOX**

[76] Inventor: **Alvin Lee Bassett,** 3414 Renick St., Saint Joseph, Mo. 64507

[22] Filed: **July 12, 1973**

[21] Appl. No.: **378,673**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **206/542,** 206/278, 220/20, 224/46 R

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A45c 11/20**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 206/4, 292, 34, 278; 190/60; 224/46 R, 46 T; 220/20

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

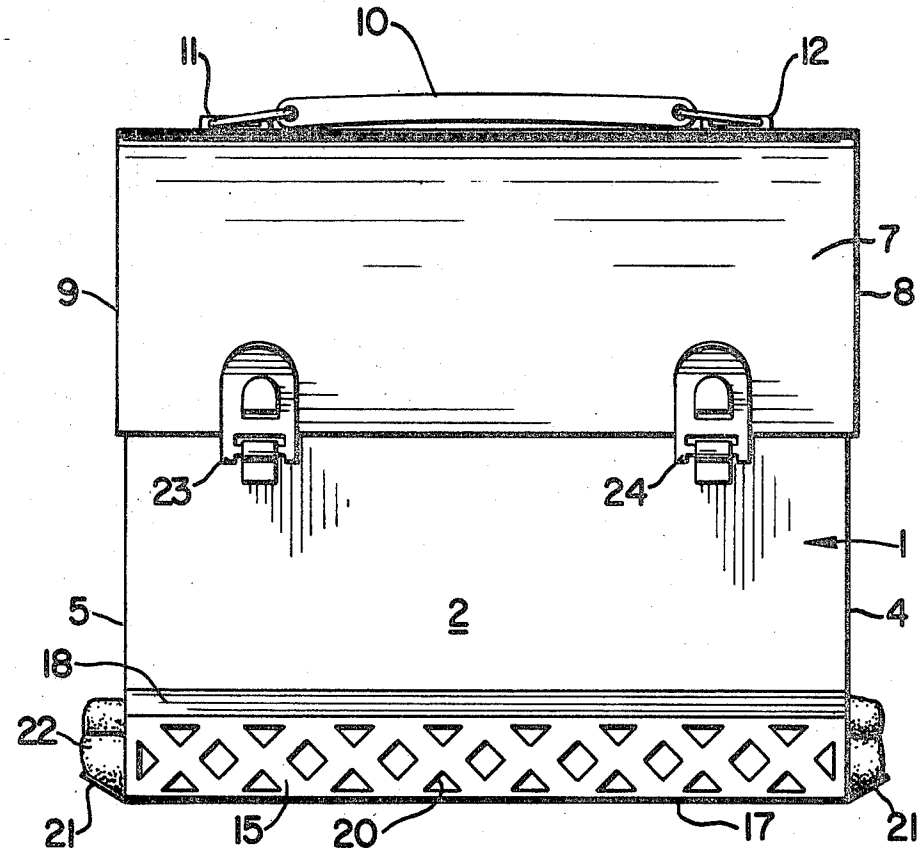
93,334	8/1869	Norman	220/20
845,964	3/1907	Mittendorf	220/20
3,330,321	7/1967	Wels	206/278
3,667,646	6/1972	Graf	220/85 R
3,675,814	7/1972	Graf	220/85 P

Primary Examiner—William I. Price
Assistant Examiner—Bruce H. Bernstein
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Fidelman, Wolffe & Leitner

[57] **ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to a modification of a form of contemporary lunch box wherein a compartment is provided below the bottom surface of the lunch box of substantially the same area as the lunch box extending longitudinally along its entire length, having enclosed sides, a bottom, and open ends to allow easy access. The depth of said compartment may vary; however, it is generally such that it will accommodate a folded garment, such as a raincoat.

7 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures



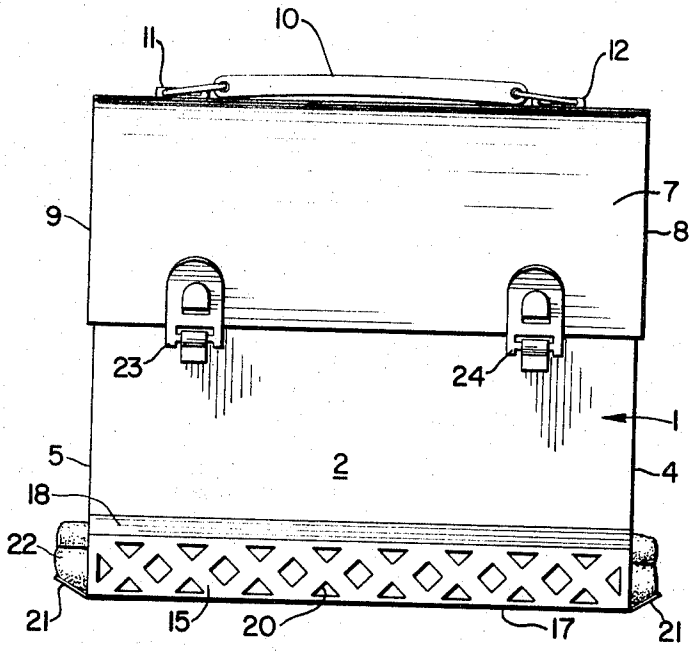


FIG. 1

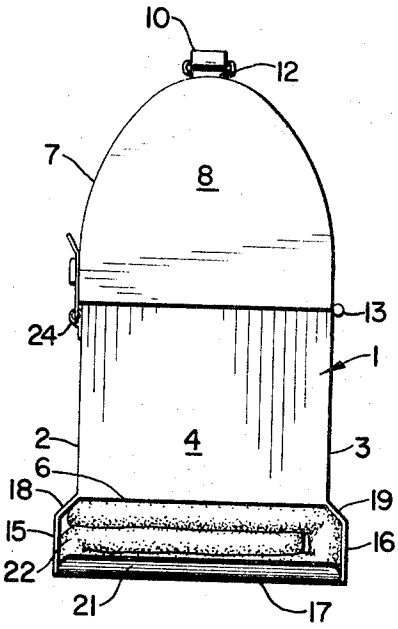


FIG. 2

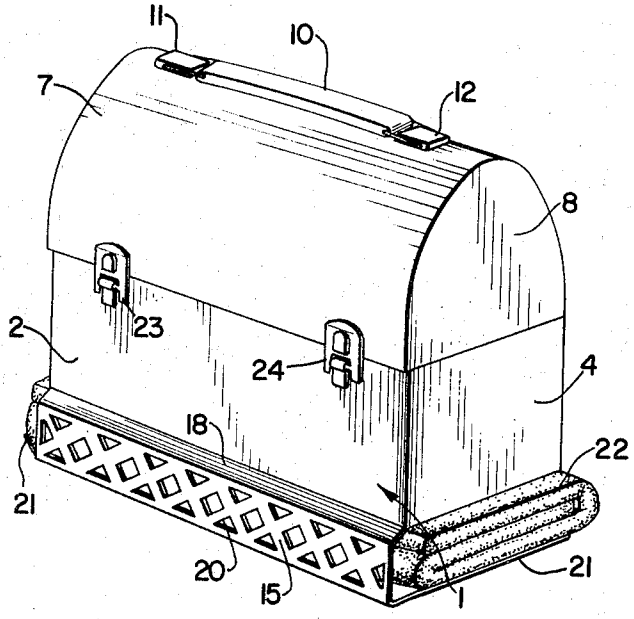


FIG. 3

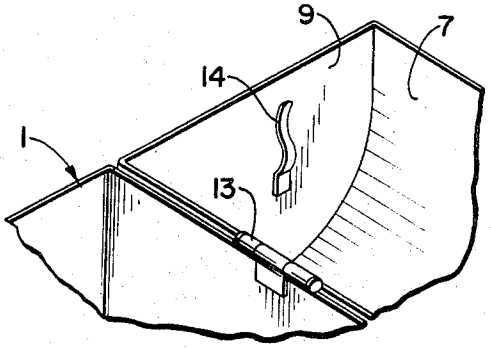


FIG. 4

AUXILIARY COMPARTMENT FOR A LUNCH BOX

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Description of the Prior Art

To the best of applicant's knowledge, the prior art does not disclose a lunch box as herein described wherein an article or garment such as a raincoat, a newspaper, etc. ... may be inserted into the easily accessible open ended compartment to facilitate storing and transporting. The raincoat currently most suited to such storage is commonly referred to as a poncho and is made from relatively thin plastic material, alone or in combination with fibrous supports such as textiles, to reinforce, promote durability, and insure water repellency.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The primary object of the present invention is to provide a compact method of storing and transporting a folded item such as a raincoat in conjunction with a lunch box such that it is easily and conveniently accessible to the carrier during inclement weather and may be refolded and easily replaced upon cessation of said inclement weather.

A further object of the instant invention is to provide a compact method of storing a raincoat with a lunch box to provide easy access by the carrier during inclement weather.

An additional object of the instant invention is to provide a constant means of storing a raincoat such that it is always available during the onset of inclement weather and obviates the necessity to foresee such weather.

A further object of the instant invention is to provide, in combination with a lunch box, an additional storage compartment below the bottom surface of the lunch box having approximately the same surface area as the lunch box and a depth sufficient to allow inserting a compactly folded raincoat therein sufficiently snugly to prevent it from sliding out.

A still further object is to provide an additional compartment, as described above, wherein either or both ends are open and wherein retention of the folded raincoat is assisted by an upturned lip on the bottom surface of the compartment below the bottom surface of the lunch box's main compartment.

An additional object of the instant invention is to provide an external compartment adjacent to the lunch box and contiguous therewith which box and compartment may be readily formed of sheet metal, plastic or other low cost material, thereby providing an extremely useful device which is inexpensive to manufacture.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

In the accompanying drawings, illustrating one preferred embodiment of the invention in which the same reference numerals designate the same parts in all of the views:

FIG. **1** is a front elevational view of the lunch box of the instant invention;

FIG. **2** is an end view of said lunch box;

FIG. **3** is a perspective view illustrating both the front and end portions of said lunch box; and

FIG. **4** shows a partial internal horizontal view of said lunch box.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now more particularly to the drawings, there is illustrated a lunch box **7** which conventionally has coacting securing means **23** and **24** to secure the upper section to the lower section and which has a mating fit where the bottom edge of the upper section contacts the upper edge of the lower section to provide a secure fitting relatively free from sliding motion which may be caused by torsional or compressional force applied to the lunch box unit.

The lower section includes a rectangular box **1** shown in FIG. **1** as having substantial height but which may also be of any shape practical for its intended purpose. The rectangular lower box portion **1** has front wall **2**, rear wall **3**, end walls **4** and **5** and bottom **6**. The front wall **2** and the rear wall **3** are substantially parallel to each other and perpendicular to the end walls **4** and **5**, which end walls are also substantially parallel to each other. Both front walls and end walls are joined to each other in an open-ended substantially rectangular shape, and one end is enclosed by bottom surface **6**. The top section **7** of the lunch box, as illustrated, has converging front and rear walls so as to define generally a parabolic shape retained by end walls **8** and **9**. It should be understood that any practical shape may be utilized for the top section. However, the top section shown here imparts particular convenience since it enables internal storage of a thermos or similar container of cylindrical shape within the cover. Additionally, an external handle **10** may be attached thereto by suitable means **11** and **12** to facilitate carrying the lunch box. The top section is joined to the bottom section by any suitable attaching means such as those which provide rotational movement about a horizontal axis along the rearward edges of the top and bottom sections, for example hinge **13**. Suitable coacting means **23** and **24** provide a means to secure the top section to the bottom section. The internal or external surface of either the top section or the bottom section may contain various clips **14**, slots, partitions or other retaining means mounted on the front, back, side or bottom walls, to internally or externally secure various objects such as important papers, security badges, eating utensils, frequently used toiletry items, photographs, identification or magnetic cards, which provide access to limited access areas, keys, etc.. The external compartment which is a contiguous part of the lower section of the lunch box is shown in FIG. **2**. The substantially rectangular compartment is defined by a top surface **6** which is common to the bottom of the lunch box and the top of the compartment front wall **15**, rear wall **16**, and bottom **17**. Front wall **15** and rear wall **16** are substantially parallel to each other and perpendicularly affixed to the bottom **17**, and the common upper surface of the compartment **6**. The front wall **15** and the rear wall **16** extend longitudinally along the lower front and rear edges, respectively, of the lower section of the lunch box **1**, and are attached thereto by any suitable means. Beveled edges **18** and **19** may be provided to accommodate a compartment section of slightly greater width than the lunch box itself. The front and rear walls **15** and **16** may contain perforations **20** to allow ventilation of the external compartment thereby facilitating quick drying of the garment placed therein after use. The bottom surface **17** of said compartment may be designed so as to

provide either one or both ends open and may also provide an upturned lip **21** on either one or both edges to prevent the garment contained therein from moving freely and slipping out of said compartment. The compact article or garment contained in said external contiguous compartment is indicated at **22.**

The primary function of the external contiguous compartment of the instant invention is to retain a poncho-type rain garment. The garment may be stored in the compartment at all times thereby constantly being readily available for use during periods of inclement weather. After use the garment may be shaken to rid it of excess moisture, folded and re-inserted into the storage compartment to insure readiness at some future time.

It is to be understood that the invention is not to be limited to the exact details of construction shown and described herein, since obvious modifications will occur to persons skilled in the art.

What is claimed is:

1. In combination, a lunch box comprising an open-ended, substantially rectangular lower box portion having means to attach a top section thereto, said top section having substantially parallel end-walls and converging front and rear walls, wherein said lower box portion of said lunch box has, subjacent thereto and contiguous therewith, a substantially rectangular open-ended compartment extending substantially along the width and length of said lower box portion of said lunch box.

2. The lunch box of claim **1** wherein said open-ended compartment extending substantially along the width and length of said lower box portion of said lunch box, is defined by a front wall and a rear wall attached to and extending substantially downwardly from the bottom surface of said lunch box, said downwardly extending front and rear walls further connected by a surface substantially perpendicular thereto.

3. The lunch box of claim **2** wherein said downwardly extending front and rear walls are perforated.

4. The lunch box of claim **2** wherein the bottom surface of the subjacent contiguous compartment extends longitudinally beyond the front and rear walls, wherein said extension is disposed angularly to partially restrict at least one open end of said compartment to assist in retaining an article placed therein.

5. The lunch box of claim **4** wherein said article is rainwear.

6. The lunch box of claim **2** wherein said top section and said bottom section are coaxially mounted about an axis traversing one longitudinal edge thereof; having a coacting securing means to secure said top section to said bottom section along the remaining longitudinal axis thereof, said top section having an external handle attached thereto, said bottom section having subjacent thereto, and contiguous therewith, a substantially rectangular compartment extending substantially along the length and width of said lower box portion wherein said downwardly extending front and rear walls are perforated and wherein the bottom surface of said compartment is longitudinally extended beyond said front and rear walls in an angular manner to partially restrict at least one open end of said compartment.

7. The lunch box of claim **6** wherein at least one retaining clip is attached to a surface thereof.

* * * * *