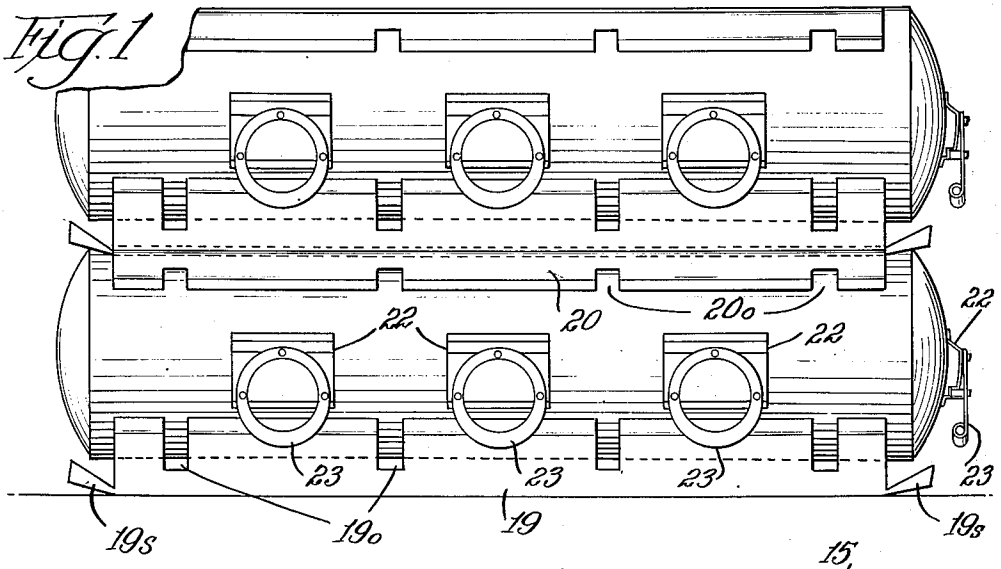
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COMBINATION TRANSPORT COFFIN AND CASKET

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Fig. 1



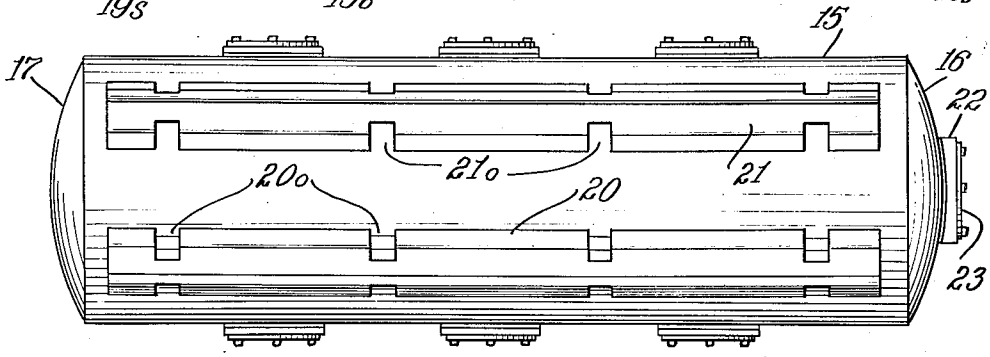


Fig. 2

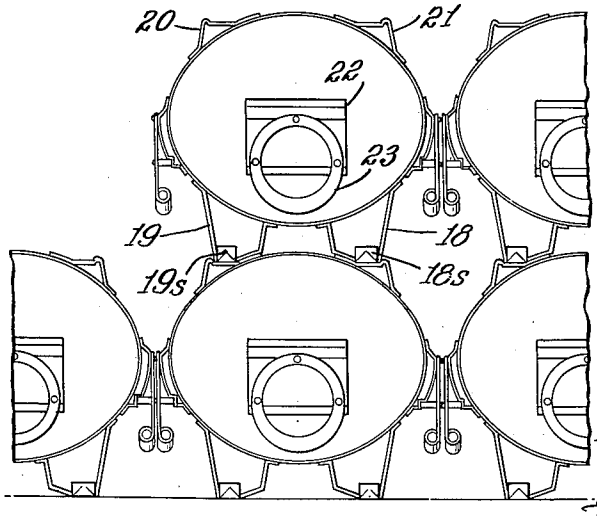


Fig. 3.

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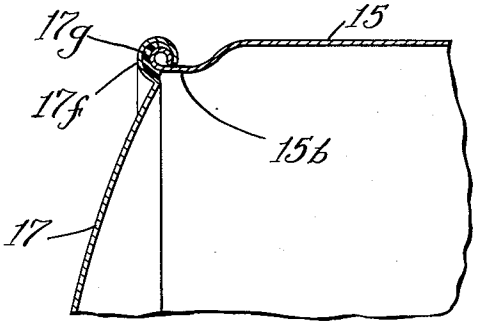


Fig. 5.

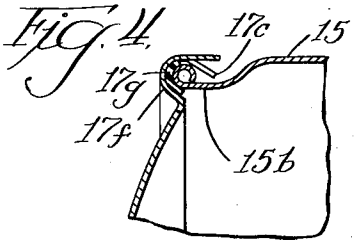


Fig. 4.

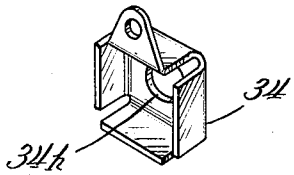


Fig. 8.

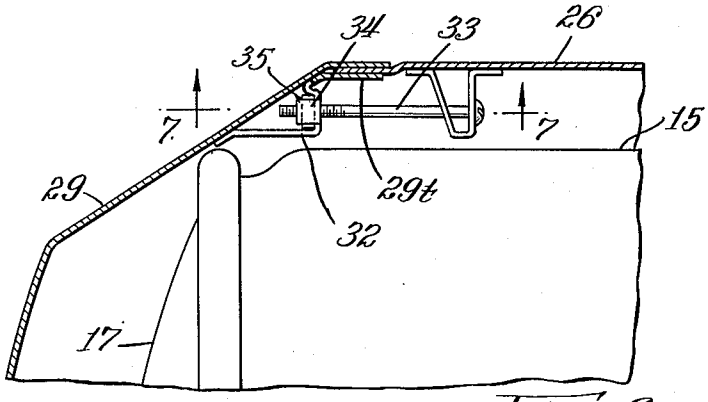
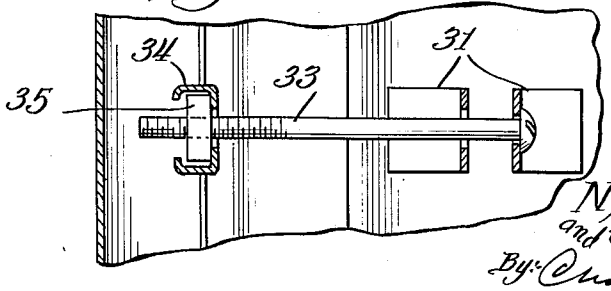


Fig. 6

Fig. 7.



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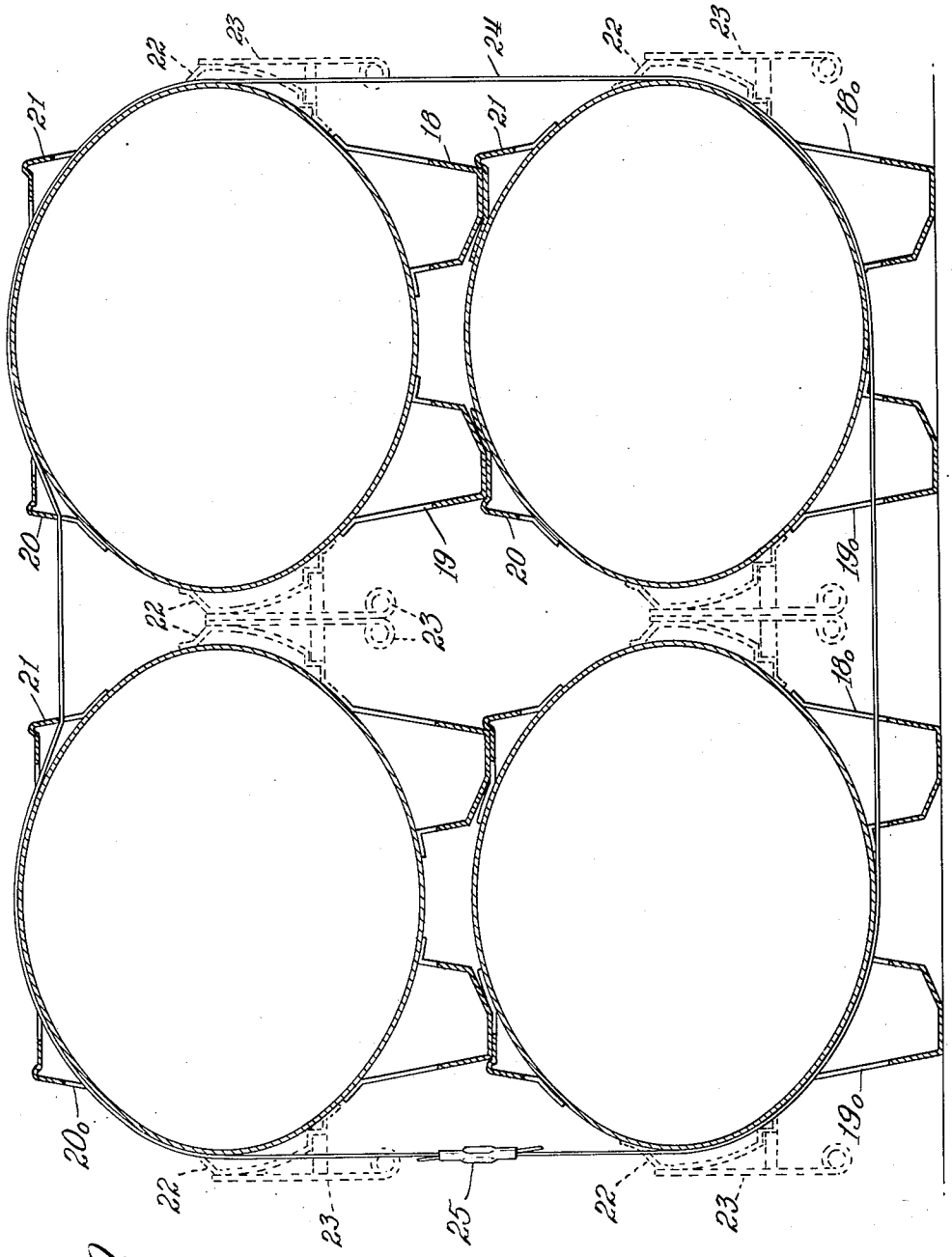


Fig. 9.

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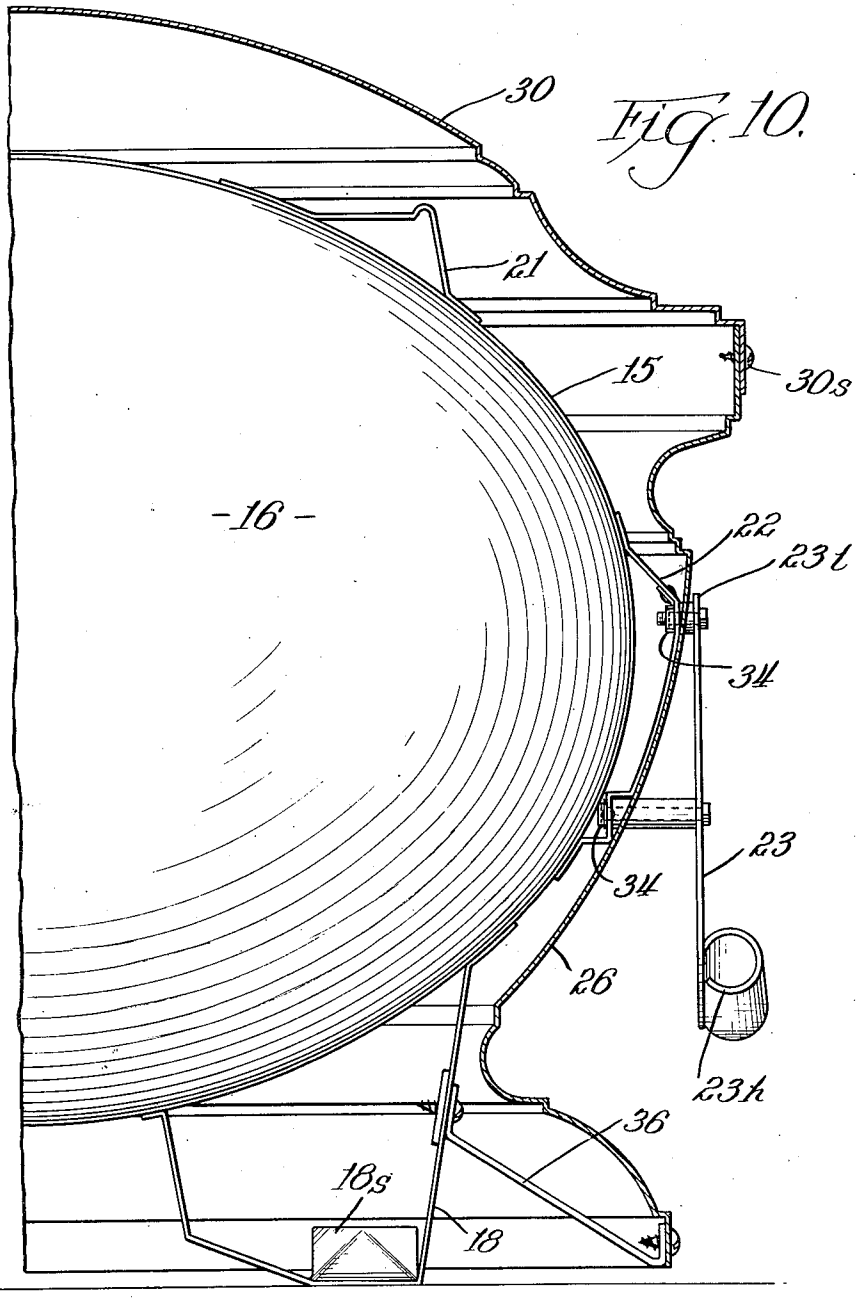


Fig. 10.

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Fig. 11.

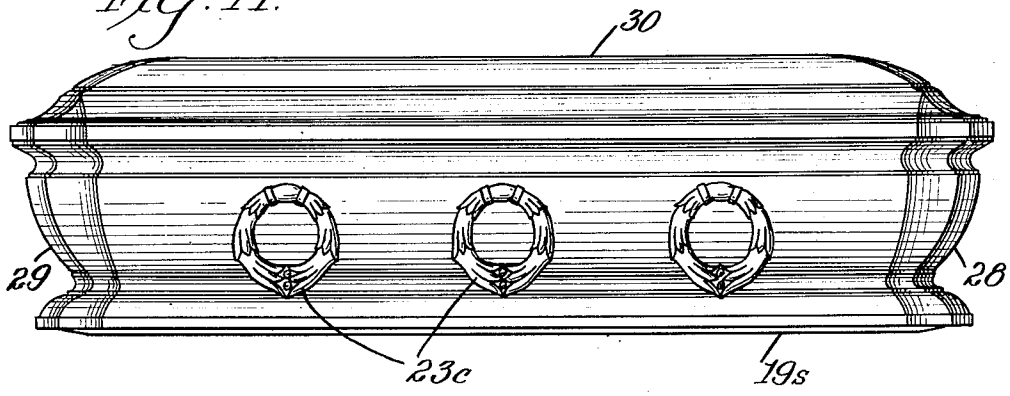


Fig. 12.

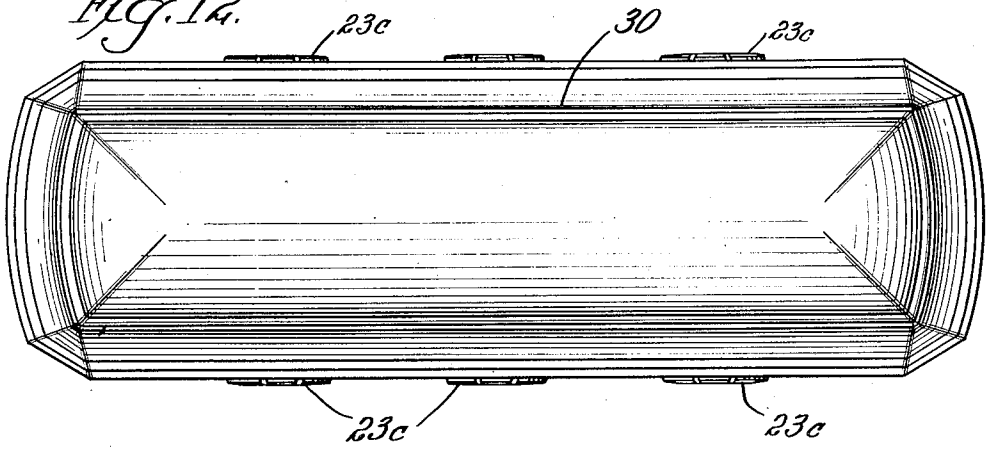
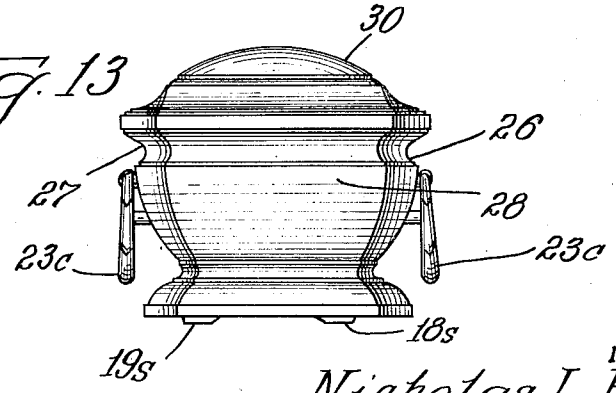


Fig. 13



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,611,946

COMBINATION TRANSPORT COFFIN AND CASKET

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Application April 10, 1946, Serial No. 661,141

7 Claims. (Cl. 27—6)

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This invention relates to a sealed utilitarian transport coffin for human bodies in combination with an esthetic casket covering which may readily be applied to and be supported on the coffin. Although the device has wider application, it will be described as applied to the problem of transporting bodies of soldiers from foreign lands and burying them in homeland cemeteries.

The problem of providing proper means to transfer the bodies of soldiers from foreign lands involves the following considerations:

A. The coffin should be light in weight, normally airtight and be readily permanently hermetically sealable.

B. It should be capable of effective stacking in shipping bundles without the necessity for boxing or crating.

C. It should be easily handled by carrying or skidding either singly or in stacks.

D. It should be readily convertible from a utilitarian coffin to a conventional esthetic burial casket.

The particular object of the present invention is to provide a light-metal coffin of great structural strength and resistance to rough handling which may be transported to and from foreign burial grounds while securely nested in multiple lots as a shipping package without the necessity for boxing or crating.

Another object is to provide a light metal coffin which is normally airtight and which later can be readily and permanently hermetically sealed.

A further object is to provide a light metal coffin having supporting and protection members attached thereto in the form of skids, interfitting stacking support members and handles, said members being later utilized to support decorative casket members over the coffin in order to provide the esthetic appearance of a conventional casket.

Other objects and benefits will be disclosed in the following descriptions and drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a side elevation view of a pair of stacked coffins;

Fig. 2 is a top plan view of the coffins shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a broken end elevation view of a group of coffins;

Fig. 4 is an enlarged broken end sectional view showing the removable head mounted on the end of the tubular coffin member before it is permanently hermetically sealed;

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Fig. 5 is a similar broken end sectional view showing the head permanently sealed on the tubular member;

Fig. 6 is a broken end sectional view of the casket showing the bolting means for telescoping the end of the casket member over the side member;

Fig. 7 is an enlarged broken side elevation view of the bolting members as they would appear on the section lines 7—7, Fig. 6;

Fig. 8 is an isometric view of the nut holding member variously used in the coffin and casket structure as will later be explained;

Fig. 9 is a transverse cross sectional view of four stacked coffins secured together by straps as a shipping bundle;

Fig. 10 is an enlarged end elevation view of the casket partly in section to show the relationship of the casket members to the coffin;

Fig. 11 is a side elevation view of the finished casket;

Fig. 12 is a top plan view of the casket shown in Fig. 11; and

Fig. 13 is an end elevation view thereof.

Now referring to the drawings and at the outset to Figs. 1, 2 and 3, our utilitarian coffin member is formed by a tubular member **15** and two closure heads **16** and **17**. We prefer to form the tubular member in an oval shape because it best fits the human body. It is supported against crushing vertical stresses from other coffins stacked above it by longitudinally extending skid members **18** and **19** and coacting longitudinally extending stacking members **20** and **21**. The small radius of the oval tube sides is admirably adapted to withstand sidewise stresses and bumps. It will be observed that the skid members **18** and **19** have ends **18***s* and **19***s* formed skidwise to provide unobstructed skidding action. It will further be observed that we have provided a series of transverse openings **19***o* and **20***o* through the skids and stacking members to permit retaining straps to be passed around the coffins when stacked as will later be explained. We further provide three handle bracing members **22** on each side of the casket and one on the head **16**, or seven in all, to which are bolted handles **23** providing ready means to handle the coffin. It will be observed that these handle members **23** together with the brace members **22** provide effective bumping members which are advantageous when the caskets are stacked.

Now referring to Figs. 4 and 5, we show the construction of the removable head on one end of our tubular member **15**. As shown in Fig. 4,

we form a depressed bead 15*b* on the end of the tube 15 and a coacting flange 17*f* on the head 17. Interposed between the flange 17*f* and the bead 15*b* is a synthetic rubber felt gasket 17*g*. From the end of the flange 17*f* we pierce out six narrow slots to provide alternate clamp sections and straight sections. The head 17 is placed on the end of the coffin member 15. Alternate sections of the flange 17*f* are hammered down to form clamp sections 17*c*. Thus the head is effectively clamped and sealed to the bead 15*b*. It will be understood that the head 16 is permanently welded in the tubular member 15. The utilitarian coffin is now watertight and, in case of necessity, it can be floated in shore from the vessel to avoid the necessity of lightering.

When the coffin is at the graveside and ready to receive the body, the head 17 can readily be removed by prying up the narrow clamp members 17*c*. After the body has been placed in the coffin, the head 17 is again mounted on the tubular member 15 and the flange 17*f* rolled over the head 15*b* by means of a hand beading roll whereby the flange is rolled in position as shown in Fig. 5 with the head hermetically sealed on the tubular member 15. This sealing process will be done under government supervision and the coffin sealed with proper government identification. It is contemplated that this official sealing of the coffin will be a permanent seal and that the coffin may not again be reopened without government authority.

Now referring to Fig. 9, we show a shipping package of four coffins bound together by four steel straps 24, each securely tensioned by lock fastenings 25. It will be observed that the skid members 18 and 19 are securely positioned by the stacking members 20 and 21 with the four coffins held in secure abutment by the abutment of the handles 23 supported on the members 22. It will be observed that the strap 24 passes through the openings 18*o*, 19*o*, 20*o* and 21*o* with the straps bearing on the tubular members 15 against the outside contours of the structural members 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23. Thus, multiple shipping packages of four coffins each can be stacked one on top of the other, or abutting the other, in an absolute minimum of space. Structural members mounted on the coffin not only add great structural strength but act as effective bumpers to protect the thin tubular coffin from shipping damage. It will, therefore, be appreciated that in our utilitarian coffin, we have provided a maximum of strength with minimum of weight with provisions for stacking the coffin in an effective shipping package of minimum dimensions.

Now referring to Figs. 10, 11, 12 and 13, we show our coffin covering members are mounted over the undecorative coffin to form an esthetic casket. The coffin covering members consist of two side members or panels 26 and 27, two end members or panels 28 and 29 and a cover member or panel 30. Although this is a preferred construction, variations are possible without departing from the spirit of the invention. As shown in Fig. 10, the side member 26 is mounted in abutting relationship with the member 22 by bolt and washer members as shown. It will be observed that when the handle 23 is mounted over the casket side member 26, the handle is reversed to present the rolled handle section 23*h* outwardly. The bottom flanges of the side members 26 and 27 are further supported by a plurality of brace members 36 mounted on the longitudinal skid members 18 and 19 by bolting through appropriate openings. It will, therefore, be appreciated that the side members 26 and 27 are securely mounted on the tubular coffin 15 by bolts through the support members 22 and the skid members 18 and 19.

Now referring to Figs. 6 and 7, we will explain how the casket end members 28 and 29 are affixed to the side casket members 26 and 27. On the inside of the end member 29 are affixed telescoping retainer members 29*t*. These telescoping members may be in multiple units to generally follow the contour of the side members 26 as clearly shown in Fig. 10. Because of the irregular shape of the joining members, the coaction of the end members 29 and 29*t* with the side member 26 will effectively align the two members while the telescoping member 29*t* will hold the edge of the end member 29 in flat alignment with the side member 26 as clearly shown in Fig. 6. Two pairs of draw screw brackets 31 and 32 are mounted on the members 26 and 29, one near the top and one near the bottom of the members. Through each bracket is mounted a draw screw 33 which enters a square nut 35 retained in a retainer cap 34, as clearly shown in Fig. 8. The nut 35 is only loosely held in the retainer cap 34 which may be bent to retain the nut or may merely cover the nut, and the opening 34*h* in it is considerably larger than the screw 33 in order to provide clearance so that fine tolerances are not required, thus permitting the parts 26 and 29 to be drawn securely together with the parts 26 and 29 in perfect alignment. Now again referring to Fig. 10 we use the same design of nut retainer bracket 34 to held the nuts loosely in position and to avoid the necessity of fine alignment between the handle 23, the side member 26 and its abutting support member 22. It will, therefore, be observed and appreciated that we have provided structure whereby the parts of our coffin and esthetic casket can be accurately assembled in relation to each other without the necessity of accurate fitting of the bolting parts. Therefore, the casket can be assembled on the coffin and the handle reversed in a minimum of time and with a minimum of labor.

Now referring to Figs. 11, 12 and 13, it will be observed that the handles 23 have been covered with decorative members 23*c*. These decorative members 23*c* are made of light metal formed to have rearward extension (not shown) which coact with the roll handle member 23*h* and the upper extending lip 23*t*, being snapped securely over the handle 23 to provide a covering having a decorative appearance in keeping with the esthetic appearance of the assembled casket. We have already pointed out that the handles 23 have been reversed when the esthetic casket covering members are mounted, therefore, the finished handles with the coverings 23*c* are mounted in artistic relation with the casket.

Now again referring to Fig. 10, it will be observed that the cover member 30 is mounted over the side and end members 26, 27, 28 and 29 and is securely attached to these members by self-tapping screws 30*s* to tie all the casket members together in a unitary casket of esthetic design.

From the foregoing it will be appreciated that we have provided a light-weight metal coffin of great utilitarian value which may be securely stacked together in shipping packages and transported with a minimum of weight and space and that this utilitarian coffin carries structural members whereby casket members may be

mounted thereon to provide an esthetic casket of conventional design.

Having thus explained our invention, we now claim as new:

1. In a burial receptacle for the human body, a thin flexible metal tubular sealable coffin, structural support members attached along the length of the coffin adjacent its upper and lower surfaces, coffin-enclosing casket-forming members in the form of attachable panels, and means for attaching the casket-forming members to said coffin to give it the appearance of a burial casket.

2. In a burial receptacle for the human body, a thin flexible metal tubular coffin, handle attaching means on the sides of said coffin, handles removably connected to said means, a plurality of casket-forming members, structural stiffening support members positioned along each upper and lower side of said coffin and to certain of which said casket-forming members are attachable, said handle attaching means being adapted to extend through certain of said casket-forming members whereby in the assembled condition of said coffin and casket-forming members said handles may be attached exteriorly of said casket-forming members to brace and reinforce the latter.

3. In a burial receptacle for the human body, a generally tubular coffin, a plurality of casket-forming panels attachable to said coffin, structural support members affixed to the coffin, means for securing the casket-forming panels to the structural support members, said casket-forming panels comprising two side panels, two end panels interfittingly connected to said side panels, and a top panel attached to and interconnecting the side and end panels, said panels in their attached condition encompassing all sides of said coffin except its bottom and giving to said coffin a casket-like appearance.

4. In a burial receptacle for the human body, a tubular coffin, a plurality of casket-forming panels attachable to said coffin, structural support members affixed to the coffin, means for securing the casket-forming panels to the structural support members, handle attaching means disposed in aligned rows on each side of said coffin, handles removably attached to said means, said casket-forming panels comprising two side panels, two end panels interfittingly connected to the side panels and a top panel attached to and interconnecting the side and end panels, said panels in their attached condition encompassing all sides of said coffin except its bottom and giving to said coffin a casket-like appearance, said handle attaching means being adapted to extend through certain of said panels whereby said handles may be removed and after assembly of the coffin and panels attached exteriorly of said panels to reinforce the same, and decorative pieces attachable to said handles in keeping with the appearance of said panels.

5. In a burial receptacle for the human body, a thin metal tubular coffin, coffin-enclosing casket-forming members, structural support members affixed to the tubular coffin providing means to skid and support the coffin and to support the casket-forming members, and means to attach the casket-forming members to the structural support members to enclose the coffin.

6. In a burial receptacle for the human body, a tubular and sealable coffin, coffin enclosing casket-forming members in the form of interconnectable side, end and top panels, and means for attaching said panels to said coffin to give the coffin the appearance of a burial casket.

7. In a burial receptacle for the human body, a tubular and sealable coffin, reinforcing members affixed to the underside of said coffin to also function as skids, coffin-enclosing casket-forming members, and means to attach the casket-forming members to the coffin to give the coffin the appearance of a burial casket, said reinforcing members extending slightly below the lowermost part of said casket-forming members to support the entire assembly.

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