Oct. 24, 1967 M. J. MYERS 3,348,280

UPRIGHT BURIAL CASKET, VAULT AND CARRIER

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Fig. 1

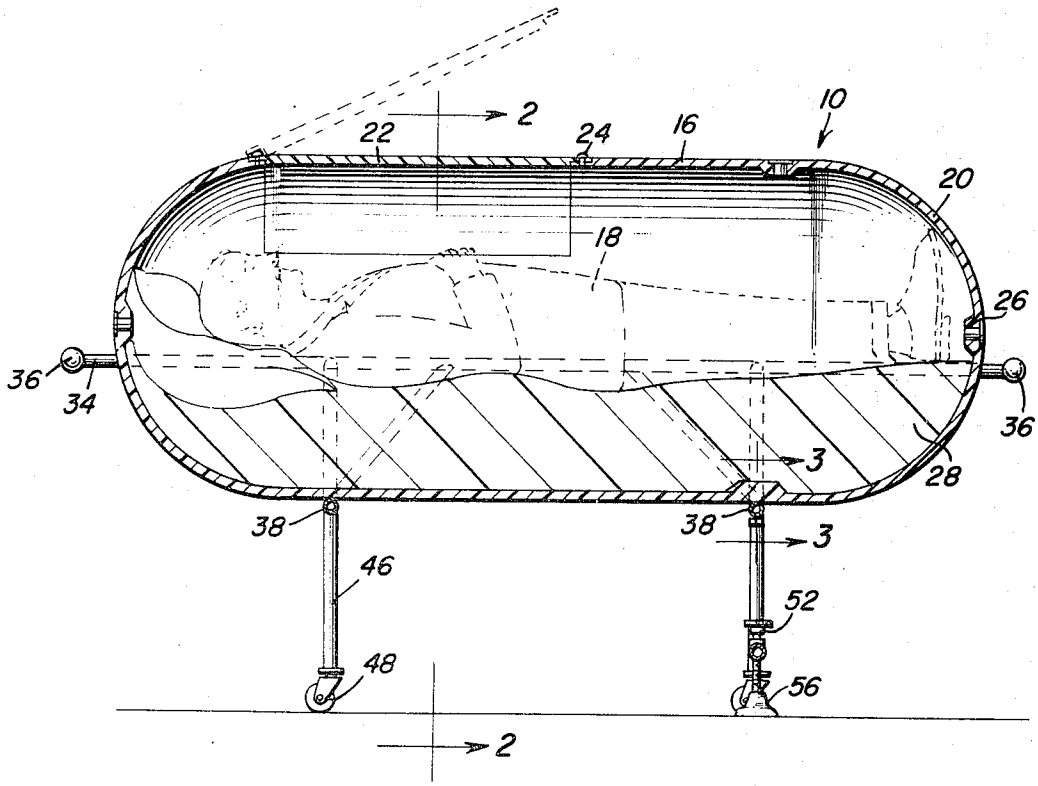

Fig. 2

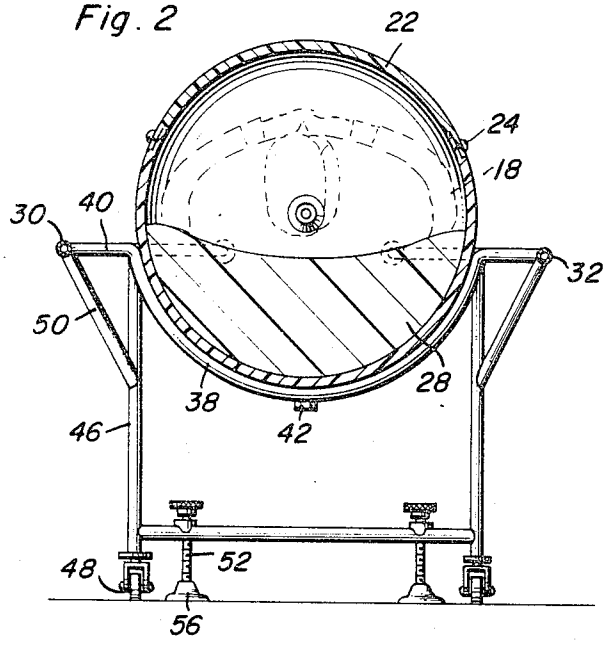

Fig. 3

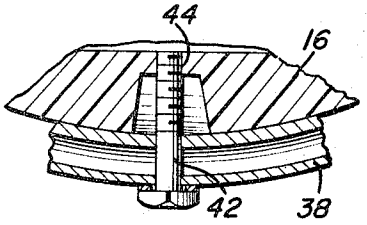

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Fig. 4

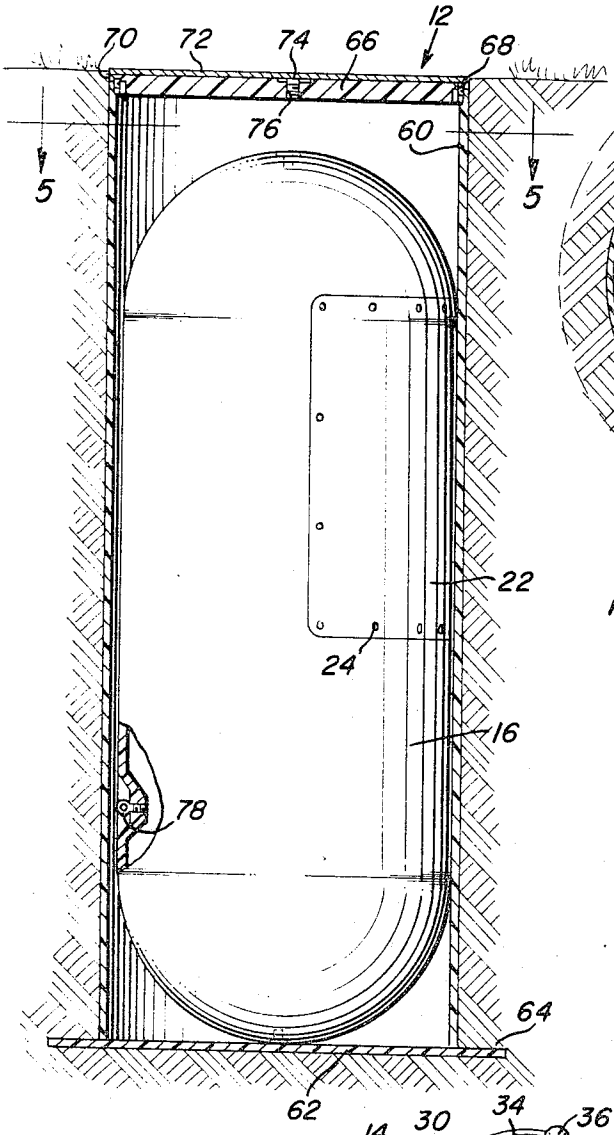


Fig. 5

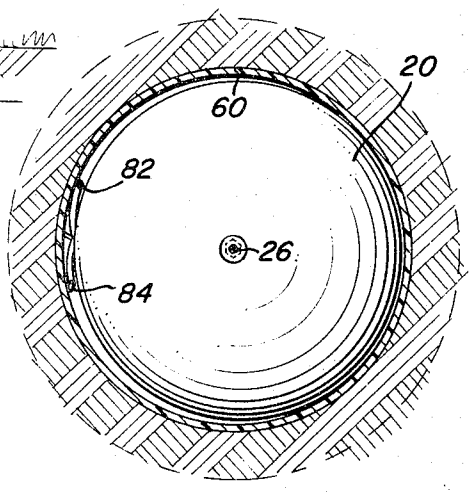


Fig. 7

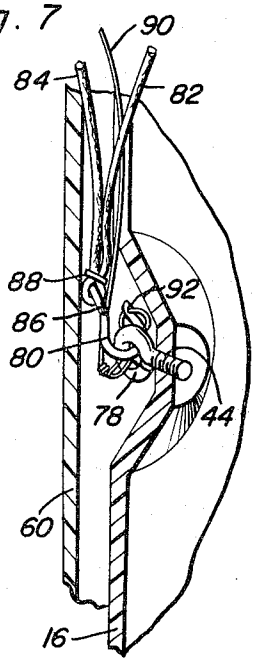
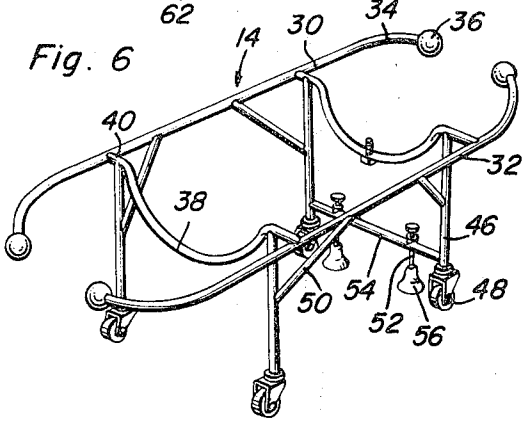


Fig. 6



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UPRIGHT BURIAL CASKET, VAULT AND CARRIER

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A burial apparatus and procedure which enables orientation of the burial vault and casket and the contents thereof to be oriented in vertical position when interred. The apparatus includes a carrier to facilitate handling of the casket during normal funeral procedures. Orientation of the casket and vault in a vertical position enables the vault to be disposed with the upper end thereof flush with the ground surface and saves consideration ground area so that a larger number of burials may be accomplished in a given area. Orientation of the vault flush with the ground surface also enables preinstallation of the vault thereby eliminating the necessity of installing the vault when the grave is opened as in normal procedures. A pair of flexible cords attached to a hook enable two persons to attach the cords to a permanently affixed eyebolt located on the wall of the casket and thus permit the lowering or lifting of the casket in an upright position in relation to the vault.

The present invention generally relates to burial apparatuses and procedures including a new system of burial in which the vault and casket as well as the body in the casket is disposed vertically instead of in the normal horizontal orientation.

Burial procedures and apparatuses have generally followed conventional practice in which a trench-like hole is dug in the ground surface and a vault and casket therein lowered in a generally horizontal position after which the earth is replaced. In some instances, burial is carried out by placing the body in an above ground tomb or mausoleum. In urban areas, the land which is reserved for cemetery plots is quite valuable and the cost of a burial is quite high in view of the necessity of employing a relatively expensive vault and casket and also the relatively expensive procedure of opening a grave in the cemetery and consequently refilling the grave after the vault and casket have been placed therein.

It is the primary object of the present invention to provide a new system of burial in which the vault is substantially cylindrical and placed in the ground so that the top thereof is substantially at ground level prior to the time of burial with the casket being vertically orientated within the vault and also having a cylindrical configuration so that it can be lowered into the vault from ground level without opening a grave site as is usually necessary. This eliminates the costly procedure of opening a grave site and further eliminates the necessity of covering the earth with a green covering material to simulate grass and eliminates the usual problems encountered when opening and closing a grave.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a cylindrical vault having a diameter equal to a conventional post hole digging auger or well drilling auger for enabling the hole for receiving the vault to be readily formed at a minimum of cost.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a casket for use in an upright burial procedure together with a display roller or carrier to which the casket is detachably fastened to enable the casket to be easily rolled and the carrier is provided with handle structures for enabling the casket and carrier assembly to be conveyed to the site of the vault and subsequently disconnected from

the carrier and the casket then lowered into the vault after which the vault is sealed at ground level and a suitable marker or the like attached to the lid of the vault. The vertical orientation of the vault enables at least double occupancy that is normally expected of a conventional size cemetery plot. Thus, in addition to decreasing the cost of the burial apparatus and procedure, the present invention also will reduce the cost for each cemetery plot, since a smaller area is necessary for receiving the vault.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide an upright burial vault, casket and carrier in which the casket and vault may be constructed of plastic materials which are inert and which are long lasting, durable, lightweight and yet easily sealed and unaffected by any conditions that may be encountered underground.

These together with other objects and advantages which will become subsequently apparent reside in the details of construction and operation as more fully hereinafter described and claimed, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

FIGURE 1 is a longitudinal sectional view of the casket of the present invention with the carrier attached thereto illustrating the openable lid in inclined position for enabling observation of the body within the casket;

FIGURE 2 is a transverse, sectional view taken substantially upon a plane passing along section line 2—2 of FIGURE 1 illustrating the structural details of the casket and the orientation of the components of the carrier in relation thereto;

FIGURE 3 is a detailed sectional view taken substantially upon a plane passing along section line 3—3 of FIGURE 1 illustrating the manner in which the bolt is secured to the casket and carrier;

FIGURE 4 is a vertical sectional view of the vault with the casket illustrated in elevation except for the attaching means for an eye-bolt for use in lowering the casket illustrating the relationship of the casket to the vault;

FIGURE 5 is a plan sectional view taken substantially upon the plane passing along section line 5—5 of FIGURE 4 illustrating the lowering ropes or lines in place;

FIGURE 6 is a perspective view of the carrier illustrating the structural details thereof; and

FIGURE 7 is a detailed sectional view illustrating the manner in which the lowering hook is attached to the eye in the bottom portion of the casket.

Referring now specifically to the drawings, the numeral **10** generally designates the casket employed as a portion of the present invention while the numeral **12** generally designates the vault and the numeral **14** generally designates the carrier for the casket.

The casket **10** includes an elongated cylindrical shell or container **16** constructed of plastic material which may be molded or otherwise formed to provide a unitary plastic structure of sufficient length to receive the body **18** of the person to be buried. The ends of the casket **16** are semi-spherical as at **20** and a portion of the periphery of the wall of the casket is provided with a removable closure **22** secured in place by fasteners **24** and a suitable sealing material when it is permanently installed such as when the casket is closed prior to lowering into the vault **12**. Suitable clips or props may be provided for proping the closure lid **22** in an upwardly inclined position to enable observation of the upper portion of the body **18** while lying in repose. The casket **10** includes embedded screw-threaded members or sockets **26** orientated at opposite ends and at selected locations peripherally thereof for for receiving fastening bolts or the like for supporting various decorative covering materials such as a depending skirt and other covering materials to render the assembly pleasing in appearance. Also, the plastic material

may be of any suitable color. For example, it may be bronze toned, grey toned or the like. Also, suitable cushions **28** or other material may be provided for supporting the body **18** at the desired position within the casket and suitable means may be provided for holding the body **18** in place in the casket **10** inasmuch as the casket and the body will be vertically oriented when received in the vault **12**.

The carrier **14** includes a pair of elongated side rails **30** and **32** each of which has inturned ends **34** terminating in a ball **36**. The side rails **30** and **32** are interconnected by a pair of arcuate saddles **38** having outwardly extending end portions **40** joined with the side rails **30** and **32**. The saddles **38** conform with the arcuate curvature of the cylindrical wall **16** as illustrated in FIGURE 2 and one of the saddles **38** is provided with a threaded bolt **42** which extends upwardly through the bottom thereof and screwthreads into an inset screw-threaded socket **44** which is recessed inwardly in the periphery of the cylindrical wall **16**.

Extending downwardly from the inner end of each extending portion **40** is a supporting leg **46** having a caster wheel **48** or any other suitable wheel on the lower end thereof for rollingly engaging the ground surface. The legs **46** are braced by inclined braces **50** which extend from the legs **46** upwardly and outwardly into engagement with the side rails **32** thus rigidifying the legs and side rails and forming a rigid unit. For locking the carrier in place, screw-threaded elements **52** are provided in a transverse lower member **54** extending between two of the legs **46** and anchor elements **56** are provided on the lower end of the threaded element **52** for braking engagement with a floor surface to prevent rolling of the carrier when such movement is undesirable.

The carrier **14** receives slightly less than one-half of the periphery of the cylindrical wall **16** of the casket **10** as illustrated in FIGURE 2 and is securely fastened thereto to prevent any possible relative movement of the casket in relation to the carrier. The side rails **30** and **32** serve as hand rails for the pall bearers with the inturned ends **34** enabling easy control of the carrier when it is being rolled to a desired destination.

The vault **12** includes a cylindrical plastic wall **60** having a circular bottom **62** with a projecting peripheral flange **64** preventing upward movement of the vault **12** in the event of excessive rain or the like. The vaults may be installed with the top edge thereof at ground level by using a conventional post hole auger or digger or any other suitable digger or auger for forming a cylindrical hole. After the vault has been lowered into the hole formed in the ground, the earth is backfilled around the vault and, of course, the upper end of the vault is provided with a plastic closure lid **66** to retain the vault in closed condition until such time as it is ready for use. This enables a number of vaults to be installed during periods of good weather or at other times so that the soil need not be disturbed at all when the casket is to be lowered into the vault. When the vault is to be used, it is only necessary to remove the lid to a remote out-of-the-way position and the casket lowered into the vault after which the lid is replaced and secured in place by a plurality of screw-threaded fasteners **68**. The lid **66** has a peripheral lip **70** which is sealed to the upper end of the cylindrical wall **60** thus forming a closure therefor in sealed relation. The marker plate **72** is placed over the lid **66** and has a depending screw-threaded stud **74** received in an embedded screw-threaded socket **76** which is normally provided with a handle attached thereto for ease of lifting and assembly of the lid and vault. After the vault has been installed, the handle is removed by unscrewing from the socket **76** and the marker plate which may be in the form of a bronze plate or the like attached thereto. The bronze plate is substantially flush with ground level thus enabling the grass in the cemetery to be easily mowed.

For lowering the casket **10** into the vault **12**, an eyebolt **78** is threaded into the threaded socket **44** after the bolt **42** is removed and a rigid hook **80** is engaged therewith. The hook has a pair of ropes or nylon cords **82** and **84** connected thereto by virtue of having the ropes extend through the loop **86** on the hook **80** and be secured by a tie member **88**. Thus, a pair of persons may lower the casket or lift the casket in relation to the vault with the ropes **82** and **84** being of sufficiently small diameter to fit within the space between the casket and the vault which is a very small space so that the normal air cushion formed under the casket will serve to cushion the downward movement thereof since the air in the vault displaced by the casket will have to pass between the vault and casket which is a restricted area and this compression of the air under the casket will retard the descent thereof.

For releasing the hook **80** from the eye-bolt **78** after the casket has been lowered into position, a wire or cord **90** extends alongside of one of the ropes and extends along the inner surface of the bight of the hook and is attached to the terminal end of the bight of the hook as at **92**. Thus, when the tension is released on the ropes **82** and **84**, tension may be applied to the wire or cord **90** which will lower the hook in relation to the eye-bolt **78** and disengage the hook **80** from the eye-bolt **78** so that the hook, ropes **82** and **84** and the wire or cord **90** may be removed from the space between the vault and casket.

As will be apparent, the components of the present invention may be constructed of long lasting and durable material. For example, the carrier may be constructed of conventional tubular material welded or otherwise interconnected for forming a dependable and rigid carrier or display roller. The components of the vault may be constructed of plastic material and any suitable sealing material may be employed for sealing the casket and also for sealing the vault after the casket has been placed therein. The new system of burial possible with the present invention enables the cost of the vault and casket to be maintained at a minimum and also enables the cost of actually opening and closing a grave site to a minimum inasmuch as it is only necessary to remove the lid to install the casket once the vault has been installed in place which will be done when the cemetery plot is laid out or may be done at any time but preferably prior to actual installation of a casket therein. Even if the vault is placed in the ground just prior to when the casket is placed therein, a conventional post hole digger will make a relatively neat cylindrical hole in the ground surface without disturbing the surrounding grass or area. This enables the acreaage in a cemetery to be more efficiently used and also enables the over-all cost of maintenance to be reduced to a minimum and also enables the initial cost of fencing, landscaping and the like to be reduced to a minimum for a given number of cemetery plots.

The foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention as claimed.

What is claimed as new is as follows:

1. A carrier for caskets comprising a pair of side rails, a pair of transversely extending arcuate saddles interconnecting the side rails, a plurality of depending legs rigidly attached to the saddles, wheels on the lower ends of the legs for enabling the carrier to rollingly engage a supporting surface, means on one of said saddles for locking engagement with a casket for securing the casket in place, said side rails having inturned end portions to form handles for controlling movement thereof when rollingly engaging a surface.

2. A casket comprising a cylindrical container having rounded semi-spherical end portions, a closure lid in a portion of the cylindrical wall of said container, means re-

movably securing the closure lid in place, means in the wall of the casket opposite from the closure lid for receiving a securing bolt to anchor the casket to a carrier and an eye-bolt for enabling handling of the casket, and means in each end of the casket for supporting decorative materials.

3. An upright burial assembly comprising a vertically disposed vault including a substantially cylindrical member having a closed bottom wall and a removable top wall, said closed bottom wall including a peripheral edge projecting beyond the cylindrical member for anchoring the vault, a marker plate overlying the top wall and having substantially the same dimensions as the top wall, means releasably interconnecting the marker plate and top wall, means releasably securing the top wall to the cylindrical member, said flange on the bottom wall anchoring the vault in the ground surface with the top wall and marker plate being substantially flush with the top of the ground surface, a casket received in the vault and including a cylindrical container having rounded semispherical end portions with the lower end portion of the casket resting directly on the inner surface of the bottom wall of the vault and the upper end portion of the casket being disposed slightly below the upper end of the vault, said

container including a closure lid in a portion of the cylindrical wall thereof for providing access to the interior thereof, means removably securing the closure lid in place, means in the wall of the casket opposite from the closure lid for receiving a securing bolt to anchor the casket to a carrier and an eyebolt for enabling handling of the casket, means in each end of the container at the apex of the rounded end portions thereof for supporting decorative materials.

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