

April 8, 1969

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3,437,181

SELF-SUPPORTING LUGGAGE UNIT

Filed July 19, 1968

Sheet 1 of 2

FIG. 1

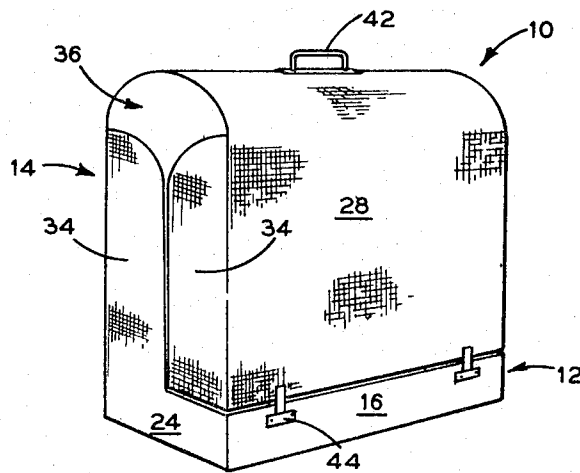
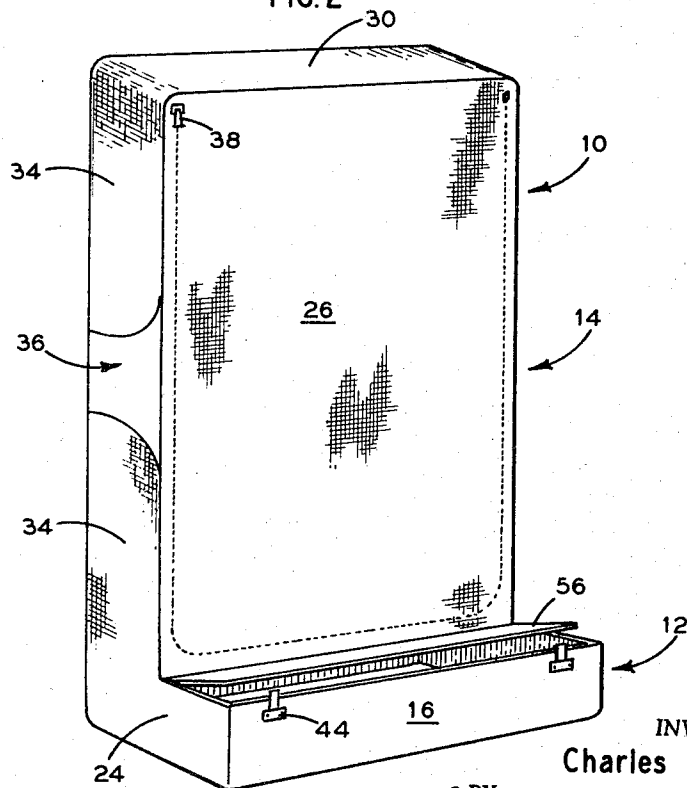


FIG. 2



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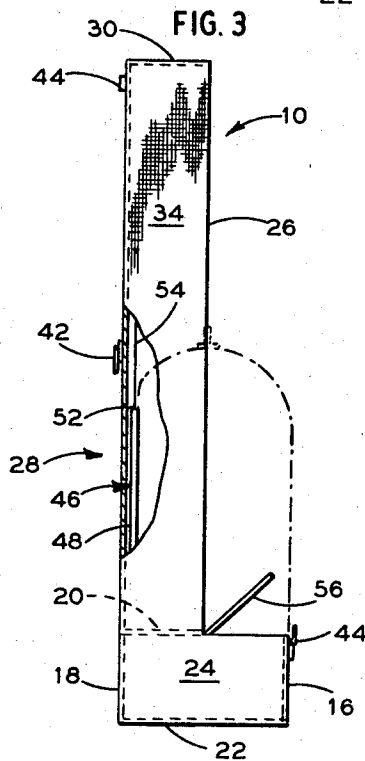
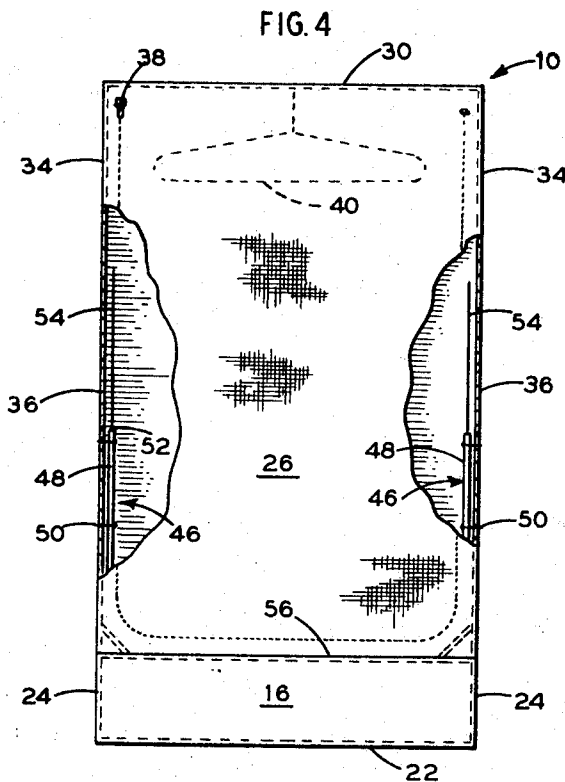
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Sheet 2 of 2



1

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SELF-SUPPORTING LUGGAGE UNIT

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4 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A self-supporting, free standing luggage unit having a base member and an upstanding foldable compartment, with means to retain the upstanding compartment in its unfolded condition.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the invention

The present invention relates generally to luggage, and more particularly, to a garment carrying luggage device.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

Heretofore, garment carrier luggage units have been proposed which are known in the art as the folding, center handled, garment hanging type. The major difficulty and disadvantage of these luggage units reside in the construction thereof wherein a hook is normally provided for hanging or suspending the unit from a supporting structure so as to permit the user to store or remove garments from the interior portion of said unit. It has been found, however, that it is often difficult to lift the unit to its hook supporting position when fully loaded with garments due to the increased weight thereof. Furthermore, in many situations, there is no place to hang or suspend the unit in the unfolded position thereof. In such situations, it is customary for the unit to be placed or laid flat on a supporting structure so that garments can be inserted into and removed from the interior portion thereof. It will be appreciated that the insertion of garments into the unit, as well as the removal of said garments therefrom, becomes more difficult when the unit is lying flat as compared to when it is suspended in a vertical position. Furthermore, if there is no closet or dresser available for storing the garments that are removed from said unit, then the garments must necessarily be left or stored inside the unit where they become wrinkled if the unit is not suspended in a vertical position. In addition, the heretofore known luggage units of the folding type, merely provide means for hanging the garments within said unit and do not provide any compartment for storing other types of wearing apparel, such as shoes, socks, shirts, sweaters or the like.

The present invention eliminates the above difficulties and disadvantages by providing a luggage unit that is self-supporting in the vertical position thereof, and thus does not have to be hung or suspended from a supporting structure. The unit further includes a separate compartment for storing additional wearing apparel and traveling accessories.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The self-supporting luggage unit of the present invention includes a base member and an elongated clothes receiving compartment upstanding therefrom; said base member being suitably dimensioned and proportioned to

2

permit the compartment to be supported and stabilized in the upstanding position thereof. Brace means are movably mounted on the compartment for retaining the upper portion thereof in said upstanding position. The base member also serves as a second compartment for storing other clothing garments and traveling accessories.

Accordingly, an object of the present invention is to provide a novel luggage unit that is self-supporting and free standing in the vertical position thereof.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an improved luggage unit in which the structural parts are so arranged and assembled that articles of clothing and other personal belongings of a traveler can be efficiently stored and made readily accessible when the unit is opened.

A further object and feature of the present invention is to provide a novel luggage unit that is economical to manufacture and gives long-lasting service.

The above and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from a consideration of the following detailed description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a folded luggage unit constructed according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a view similar to FIG. 1, illustrating the luggage unit in the upstanding position thereof;

FIG. 3 is a side elevational view, with parts broken away and parts in section, illustrating the luggage unit in the upstanding position thereof; and

FIG. 4 is a front elevational view thereof, with parts broken away and parts in section.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to the drawings, numeral 10 represents the luggage device constructed in accordance with the present invention. Luggage device 10 is composed of a base member 12 and an elongated clothes receiving compartment 14 upstanding therefrom. Base member 12 is formed having the front panel member 16 and a back panel 18 joined by bottom and side panels 22 and 24 respectively; said panels being made of any suitable construction and material. Base member 12 is preferably constructed to provide a second compartment for housing or storing wearing apparel, such as shoes, socks, etc., and traveling accessories or the like, in a manner hereinafter described.

Clothes receiving compartment 14 is constructed similar to base member 12 and is provided with a front access panel 26 and a back panel 28 joined by top, bottom and side panels 30, 20 and 34 respectively. Compartment 14 is generally conventional to heretofore known garment carrier luggage units of the folding, garment hanging type wherein hinge means 36 are provided on medial portions of side panels 34 for permitting the upper portion of the compartment 14 to be folded along a transverse line in said medial portion and in opposed relation to the lower portion of said compartment as shown in FIG. 1. In this connection, hinge means 36 can preferably consist of a flexible insert connecting the upper and lower portions of compartment 14; and the front and back panels 26, 28 of said compartment 14 can be formed of a suitable fabric or synthetic plastic material to facilitate said folding operation. Closure means 38, preferably in the form of a conventional zipper, is provided along the bottom and

3

side marginal portions of front access panel 26 to render the interior portion of compartment 14 accessible for use. Referring to FIG. 4, one or more hangers 40 is suitably supported from the bottom of top panel 30 for hanging articles of clothing, such as pants, jackets, suits or the like. Handle means 42 are also suitably connected to back panel 28 to facilitate carrying luggage device 10 in the folded position thereof.

In accordance with the present invention, base member 12 is suitably dimensioned and proportioned to compartment 14 to permit said compartment to be supported and stabilized in the upstanding position thereof. In this connection, back panel 18 of base member 12 is constructed and located flush with the back panel 28 of compartment 14, with the depth of base member 12 being substantially equal to the combined depths of the upper and the lower portions of compartment 14 in the folded position thereof. The arrangement is such that when compartment 14 is in folded position thereof, as shown in FIG. 1 and by the phantom line in FIG. 3, the top panel 30 of said compartment 14 abuts a forward portion of base member 12, and more particularly, the closure means 56 in the closed position thereof. Complementary locking means 44 are suitably provided on the upper marginal surface portion of back panel 28 and on the upper marginal surface portion of front panel 16 respectively, for retaining compartment 14 in the folded position thereof. It will be appreciated that the respective locations of handle means 42 and the complementary locking means 44 are purely matters of choice and convenience and are not to be considered as being limitations on the present invention.

The present invention further provides novel brace means 46 which are movably mounted on compartment 14 for retaining the upper portion of said compartment in the upstanding position thereof. Referring to FIGS. 3 and 4, brace means 46 includes a sleeve member 48 located adjacent the juncture of back panel 28 and side panels 34. In the preferred construction, a sleeve member 48 is suitably mounted on each side panel 34 by means of suitable fasteners, such as U-shaped bolts 50, or the like, with the open end 52 of said sleeves being located in advance of hinge means 36. An elongated member 54, preferably in the form of a rod, is slidably mounted in each sleeve 48 for movement between projected and retracted positions thereof. The arrangement is such that when rods 54 are in the retracted positions thereof, the upper portion of compartment 14 can be folded into opposed relation to the lower portion of said compartment. Conversely, when rods 54 are in the projected positions thereof, said rods extend beyond hinge means 36 and are engageable with either back panel 28 or side panels 34 to thereby retain the upper portion of compartment 14 in the upstanding position thereof. If desired, latch means (not shown) can be provided for anchoring rods 54 in the projected positions thereof. It will be appreciated that while sleeve members 48 are shown as being mounted to the lower portion of compartment 14, said sleeve members 48 can alternatively be mounted on the upper portion of compartment 14 with the open ends 52 thereof being located above hinge means 36 and in advance thereto.

Accordingly, it is now apparent that luggage device 10 need not be hung or suspended from a supporting structure in order to maintain compartment 14 in the upstanding position thereof. It is only necessary to rest base member 12 on a supporting surface, such as a floor, and slide rods 54 to the projected positions thereof to thereby retain compartment 14 in its unfolded position as shown in FIGS. 3 and 4. It is further apparent that the luggage device of the present invention lends itself for use in travel, particularly when wardrobe and dresser facilities are not available, such as in camps, motels and similar establishments. In addition, luggage of this kind has a practical use where people are on the move and are simply making overnight stops where the need for completely unpacking the luggage is not essential. In these uses, the

4

garments can be maintained in position in the luggage, and, yet, hung for the removal of wrinkles and the like, thus keeping the packed garments in much better condition than would be possible with conventional type of luggage.

Referring to FIGS. 2 and 3, additional storage facilities are provided for storing other garment articles together with traveling accessories. In this connection, base member 12 serves as a second compartment for storing such other clothing articles, such as shoes, socks, etc., and is provided with closure means 56 for permitting access to said second compartment. In the preferred construction, closure means 56 consists of a door that is suitably connected to bottom panel 20 for pivotable movement between open and closed position. Door 56 is suitably dimensioned so that the front face portion thereof is flush with front panel 16 in the closed position thereof so as not to interfere or prevent operation of the complementary locking means 44. It will be appreciated that door 56 can alternatively be pivotally connected to side panels 24. In this connection, bottom panel 20 can be eliminated, if desired, so as to afford additional length to compartment 14. Furthermore, said closure means can alternatively be formed of sliding doors or include a zipper type access arrangement similar to that provided for front access panel 26 of compartment 14. Latch means (not shown) may also be suitably provided for retaining door 56 in the closed position thereof.

While a specific embodiment of the invention has been shown and described in detail, it will be readily understood and appreciated that various changes or modifications thereof may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A luggage device comprising:

- (a) a base member;
- (b) an elongated clothes receiving compartment upstanding from said base member;
- (c) said compartment having hinge means located on medial portions thereof for permitting the upper portion of said compartment to be folded along a transverse line in said medial portion and into opposed relation to the lower portion of said compartment; and
- (d) brace means movably mounted on one of the compartment portions for movement between projected and retracted positions for movement between projected and retracted positions thereof;
- (e) said brace means in the retracted position thereof permitting folding of the upper portion of the compartment into opposed relation to the lower portion of said compartment, and in the projected position thereof extending beyond the hinge means and being engageable with the other compartment portion to retain the upper portion of the compartment in the upstanding position thereof.

2. The luggage device as recited in claim 1, wherein said compartment comprises a front access panel and a back panel joined by top, bottom and side panels; said brace means including sleeve means located adjacent the juncture of the back and side panels; said sleeve means having an open end located in advance of said hinge means; and said brace means further including an elongated member slideably mounted in said sleeve means for movement between said projected and retracted positions.

3. The luggage device as recited in claim 2, wherein said base member comprises a second compartment having a front panel and a back panel joined by bottom and side panels, the back panel of said second compartment being flush with the back panel of the first mentioned compartment, the depth of said second compartment being substantially equal to the combined depth of the upper and lower portions of the first compartment in the folded posi-

tion thereof; and closure means on the second compartment.

4. The luggage device as recited in claim 3, wherein the top panel of the first compartment abuts a forward portion of the second compartment in the folded position thereof; complementary means on the upper portion of the first compartment and on the second compartment, respectively, for retaining said first compartment in the folded position thereof; and handle means on the first compartment for carrying said luggage.

5

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