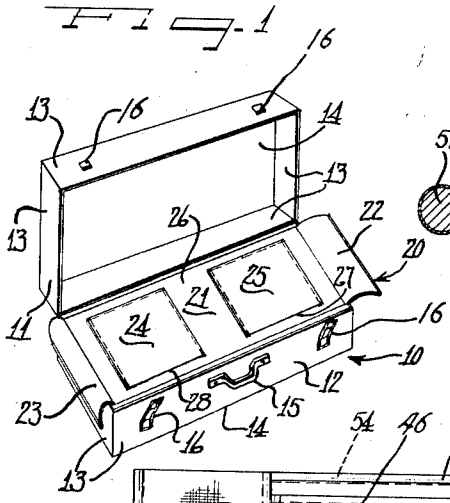
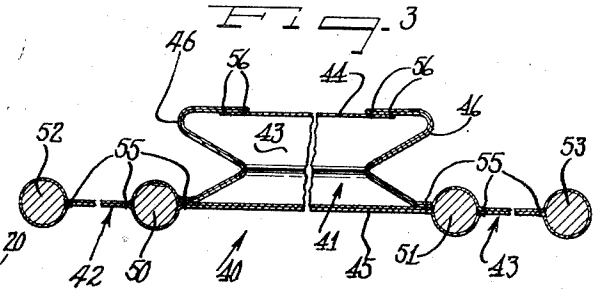
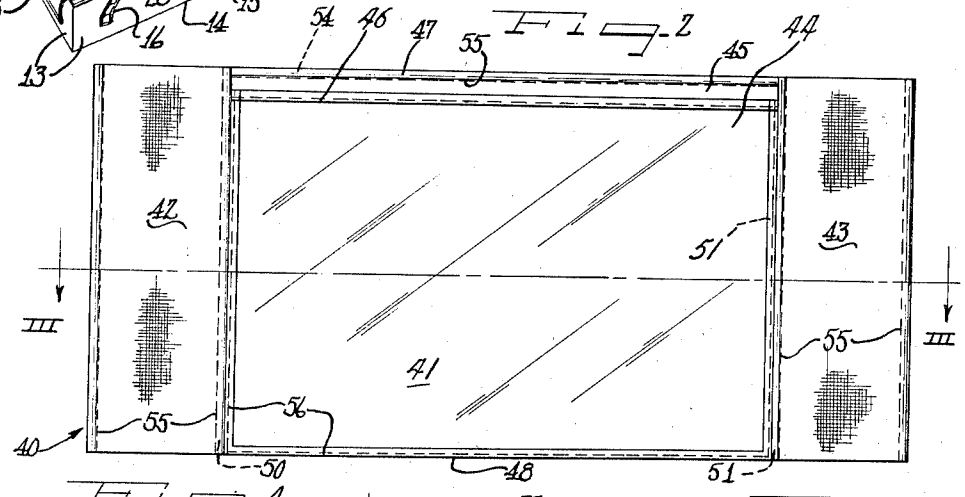
Jan. 11, 1955 W. C. CHESNUT 2,699,235

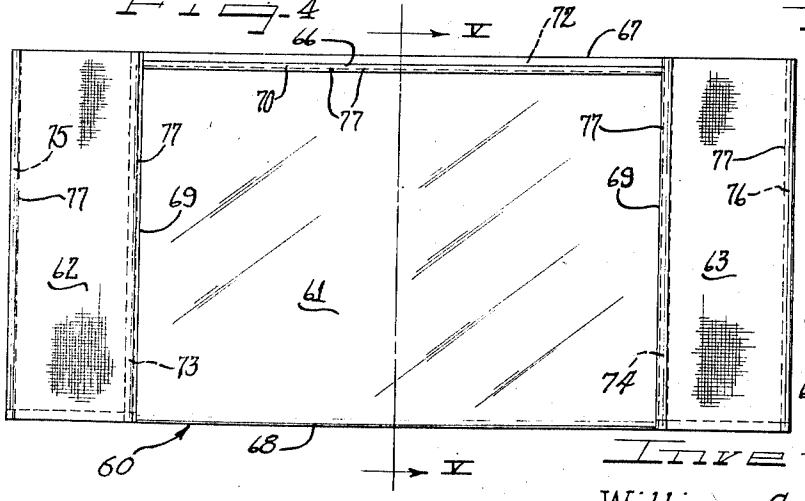
LUGGAGE TRAY

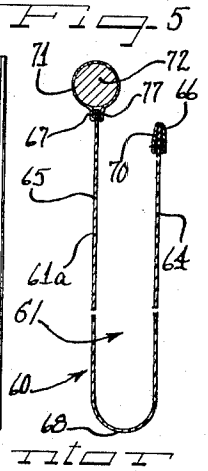
Filed May 27, 1953











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by Hill, Sherman, Meroni, Gross & Simpson Attys

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2,699,235

LUGGAGE TRAY

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6 Claims. (Cl. 190—41)

The present invention relates to an improvement in luggage trays, and particularly to an improvement in garment containing luggage trays for free disposition in an article of luggage or the like.

It is a principal object of the present invention to provide an improved garment or apparel container having a most advantageous use as a flexible luggage tray or sectioning device for free disposition in an article of luggage and freely transportatable into and out of a luggage case or bureau drawer or closet shelf or other place of garment or apparel storage whereas convenient storage in a safe manner for such articles as apparel is often difficult.

Difficulty in safe and convenient storage or placement of articles of apparel is frequently experienced in attempts to properly pack a suitcase or the like with the minimum amount of wrinkling and with maximum convenience in finding or removing the articles placed therein.

Heretofore, it has been the practice of the luggage industry to provide a very large luggage unit such as trunks, fortnight cases and steamer trunks with removable trays. The trays which have been provided heretofore, however, were almost invariably made of heavy weight rigid material such as metal or fibreboard or wood which added considerably to the weight of the luggage piece. Smaller luggage units than those mentioned above were also occasionally provided with luggage trays of the same character but because of their weight and rigidity were usually considered to be more of a nuisance than a convenience.

The weight problem became particularly acute with the acceleration in the quantity of air travel in which baggage weight per passenger is seriously curtailed.

Thus, the manufacture of trays for the convenience of users of luggage pieces has been substantially discontinued by manufacturers except for very large luggage units wherein the convenience of a tray to separate the unit into sections is almost a necessity, or frequently so considered.

An additional problem not spelled out above results from the rigidity present in all heretofore known luggage trays. In packing a luggage piece such as a suitcase or trunk it is virtually impossible to pack the piece with garments or apparel in such a manner that a flat upper surface is available across all of the article without space therebetween or about the edges thereof. Nevertheless conventional rigid heavy luggage trays presuppose such a quality of packing and presented a flat inflexible lower surface to the garments and articles of apparel positioned thereunder and within the luggage unit. Usually, therefore, placement of the luggage tray in the unit and on top of the articles packed thereunder resulted in unnecessary pressing down upon the articles where high in the unit and a considerable amount of waste space between those articles and about the same.

By the present invention, all of these problems are obviated and convenient to use, light weight flexible luggage trays may be made available to the users of luggage. Furthermore, luggage trays embodying the principles of the present invention may be made for any size or configuration of luggage unit and are not restricted to use within a luggage unit as were heretofore known types of luggage trays. Luggage trays embodying the principles of the present invention may be employed as garment containers for ready placement on a closet shelf or in a bureau drawer to conveniently and easily section those places of storage without impairing the quantity of storage space available.

In addition, luggage trays and garment containers em-

bodying the principles of the present invention are convenient to transport from place to place even while carrying any garments or articles of apparel which may be packed therein, or placed thereon.

It is therefore an important object of this invention to provide a flexible light weight luggage tray and garment container.

It is also an important object of the present invention to provide a luggage tray or garment container of flexible construction but having frame members so disposed thereabout and secured thereto as to maintain the shape of the same without impairing the flexibility thereof.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a garment container or luggage tray having at least one transparent or translucent wall or panel defining the pocket portion or portions thus facilitating convenient identification of the contents of the same.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a luggage tray with closure and handle flaps facilitating convenient removal of the empty or packed trays from place to place as desired.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a light weight, flexible luggage tray of matching quality and material to the interior of a luggage piece to carry the same.

Other and further objects of the present invention as well as other features and advantages thereof will readily present themselves to those skilled in the art as well as others familiar with the use of luggage units and from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments of the present invention, the appended claims and the accompanying drawings which form a part of this specification and are intended to fully disclose every detail shown therein in which like reference numerals refer to like parts and in which:

Figure 1 is an isometric view illustrating a preferred embodiment of a luggage tray or garment container in accordance with the principles of the present invention and in combination with a suitcase or the like to contain and/or carry the same;

Figure 2 is a plan view of another embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is an enlarged, broken sectional view of the embodiment illustrated in Figure 2 taken along the line III—III thereof;

Figure 4 is a plan view of still another embodiment of the present invention; and

Figure 5 is an enlarged, broken sectional view of the embodiment illustrated in Figure 4 and taken along the line V—V thereof.

As shown on the drawings:

There is illustrated in Figure 1 a preferred embodiment of a luggage tray or garment container in accordance with the principles of the present invention and in combination with a suitcase or like luggage unit. The suitcase or like luggage unit **10** may be of conventional design or character having hinged top and bottom sections **11** and **12**, respectively, each of which sections may be of one-half box-like construction with partial height side walls **13** and top and bottom walls **14**, respectively, (the bottom wall **14** being hidden in this view by the luggage tray or garment container **20**). The luggage piece **10** may also, of course, be equipped with a convenient carrying means such as a handle **15** and convenient closure securing means such as locking devices **16**. Since conventional luggage pieces are substantially rectangular in plan view, the luggage piece **10** in Figure 1 has been so illustrated.

The luggage tray or garment container **20**, of Figure 1, is also of a generally rectangular configuration with a central pocketed section **21** of substantially the same dimensions as the interior plan of the luggage unit **10** so that the luggage tray or garment container **20** will be of the most convenient size for free disposition in the luggage piece **10** and to effectively section the same when disposed therein. A further detailed description of the luggage tray or garment container **20** hereinafter is given following a detailed description of the embodiments illustrated in Figures 2 and 4, respectively, since the embodiment **20** may be better understood following an under-

standing of the embodiments of Figures 2 and 4, respectively.

In Figures 2 and 3 there is illustrated another embodiment of a luggage tray or garment container embodying the principles of the present invention. The luggage tray **40** therein illustrated includes a central pocketed section **41** and a pair of side panel closure flaps and handling devices **42** and **43**, respectively.

The central pocketed section **41** preferably is comprised of a pair of superimposed panels **44**, **45** substantially identical in dimension and secured together in the hereinafter described manner. The upper and lower walls **44** and **45**, respectively, may also be of the same material but it is preferred that the upper wall **44** of the central pocketed section **41** be composed of a flexible transparent or translucent sheet material such as a cellulose compound such as an ethyl cellulose or cellulose acetate or a cellulose nitrate or such as a polystyrene, polyethylene or other natural or synthetic transparent or translucent flexible sheet material so that the user of the luggage tray **40** may be provided with easy and convenient identification of garments or articles of apparel contained within the pocketed section **41**.

Like the central pocketed section **21** of the luggage tray **20**, the central pocketed section **41** of the luggage tray **40** is preferably rectangular as shown and therefore the upper and lower walls or panels **44** and **45**, respectively, are preferably rectangular in shape, although they may be square or have another configuration if the suitcase or other luggage piece into which they are to be fitted has that desired configuration. The upper and lower walls or panels **44**, **45** are secured along three corresponding sides of each thereof to an expansion member **46** which may take an accordion pleated form to provide for expansion of the pocket defined by the panels **44** and **45**, thereby providing easy insertion and removal of a multiplicity of garments or articles of apparel from the pocket of the pocketed section **41**. The expansion members **46** may be made of the same material as that of the bottom wall **45** and the flaps **42** and **43**. This material is preferably the same material as that used for lining the interior of the suitcase or other luggage unit into which the luggage tray or garment container is to be fitted. Such a material may be a natural or synthetic textile material such as cotton or silk or nylon or rayon, or the like.

The accordion pleated expansion members **46** are secured between the upper member **44** and the lower member **45** of the central pocketed section along the two widthwise edges of the section **41** and along one lengthwise edge of the section **41**, thus defining a pocket in the section **41** having three secured together edges for the upper wall and lower wall **44** and **45**, respectively, and a free edge for each of the upper wall **44** and the lower wall **45**. The free edge **46** of the upper panel **44** may lie directly over the front free edge **47** of the lower panel **45** but a preferred embodiment of the present invention positions the free edge **46** slightly inwardly from the edge **47** to facilitate convenient separation therebetween and therefore convenient opening of the pocket in the pocketed section **41**.

The side panels or closure flaps **42** and **43**, respectively, are composed preferably of a double thickness of textile material as are the accordion pleated expansion members **46** and the lower wall or panel **45** of the central pocketed section **41**. These panels or closure flaps **42** and **43**, each having a width preferably somewhat less than one-half of the length of the upper and lower pocket panels or walls **44** and **45**, have a length substantially the same as the width of the lower pocket wall **45**. This construction may be most conveniently obtained by constructing the lefthand flap or panel **42**, the bottom wall **45** of the central pocketed section **41** and the righthand flap **43** all of the same piece of material of double thickness and thereafter securing the expansion members **46** and the upper pocket wall **44** over that portion of the above described unitary construction which is to serve as the bottom pocket wall for a side. If it is preferred to construct the luggage tray or garment container from a large multiplicity of parts, then of course the closure flaps **42** and **43** may be made separately and thereafter joined or secured to opposite secured together widthwise edges of the central pocketed section **41**. For the embodiment of the present invention illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, however, it is preferred to employ the unitary

construction for the several panels **42**, **43** and **45** described hereinabove.

An important feature of luggage trays or garment containers embodying the principles of the present invention lies in the proper utilization and placement of frame members such as bars or rods or the like. These frame members should be so disposed about the luggage tray as to maintain the form thereof without unduly impairing the flexibility thereof.

In the embodiment of the invention illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 a pair of frame members **50** and **51** are secured between the two thicknesses of material of the bottom wall **45** and the flap members **42** and **43** along the junction line between the flap members **42** and **43** and the central pocketed section **41**, respectively. The frame members **50** and **51** are preferably of the same length as the length of the panels or flaps **42** and **43** and in the embodiment shown are preferably formed of light weight round wooden bar stock such as a dowel rod of convenient diameter. In Figure 3 these rods or frame members have been enlarged to emphasize their presence and the manner in which they are positioned in the luggage tray **40**. Another pair of substantially identical frame members **52** and **53** are similarly secured to opposite, parallel free lengthwise edges of the panels or flaps **42** and **43**. The frame members or bars **52** and **53** are preferably identical to the frame members **50** and **51** and similarly are secured between the thicknesses of material of the flaps or panels **42** and **43** parallel to the frame members **50** and **51**.

Another and fifth frame member **54** is secured along the free front edge **47** of the lower wall **45** of the pocket section **41** in a like manner and extends between the frame members **50** and **51** but is not secured thereto except through the flexible material of the lower wall or panel **45**. That is, the frame member **54** along the long free edge **47** of the lower wall **45** is not directly fastened and secured to the frame members **50** and **51**.

This is an important feature which should be specifically noted since a firm securing of these three frame members to each other would seriously reduce flexibility of the luggage tray **40** and seriously impair its utility even though it would still be light weight and otherwise convenient to use. So, too, an additional frame member may be secured along the secured together long edge **48** of the central pocketed section **41** which also should not be secured to the frame members **50** and **51** even though it would extend therebetween. In preferred embodiments of the present invention, however, such a frame member as that just described, the one along the secured together edge **48**, is not employed since it, too, would serve to seriously impair flexibility of the unit. Of course, if it is so desired the additional frame member may be employed and may be secured to the members **50** and **51** and the frame member **54** may also be secured to the frame members **50** and **51** and this construction is well within the scope of the present invention even though it is not a preferred embodiment thereof.

Hereinabove, numerous parts, sections, panels, walls and frame members have been referred to as having been secured together variously. Although no specific form of securing means is critical to the present invention, a preferred means of securing is by sewing or stitching through the various flexible members as at **55** through the dual thicknesses of the panels or flaps **42** and **43** and the bottom pocket wall **45** and the expansion members **46** and as at **56** through the expansion members **46** and the upper pocket wall or panel **44**. Other convenient securing means not inconsistent with the principles of the present invention may be employed without departing from the scope and spirit of the novel concept of the present invention.

Another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 wherein a luggage tray or garment container **60** is comprised of a central pocketed section **61** and a pair of side flaps or closure panels **62** and **63**. In this embodiment of the invention the central pocketed section **61** is preferably composed of a single sheet of material such as those described above and preferably having translucent or transparent qualities. The single sheet **61***a* forming the central pocketed section **61** is folded over to form a top wall or panel **64** and a bottom wall or pocket panel **65**, thus providing free pocket access front edges **66** and **67** and a closed bottom edge **68**, as viewed in the drawings, for the central pocketed section **61**. The opposite lateral edges of the panels or pocket

walls 64 and 65 are secured together as at 69 to complete the three-sided closure of the pocketed section 61.

The closure flaps or panels 62 and 63, which have the same dimensional relation to the central pocketed section 61 as the dimensional relation between the closure flaps or panels 42 and 43 have with the central pocketed section 41 of the luggage tray or garment container 40, are secured respectively to the opposite secured together lateral edges of the central pocketed section 61. These flaps or closure panels 62 and 63 may be formed of any desired flexible material but are preferably formed of the same material as the lining for the luggage unit which is to carry the luggage tray or garment container 60. Thus, the panels would also be formed of preferably the same material as those described above for the closure flaps or panels 42 and 43.

This same lining material or fabric may be used to provide a trimming strip 70 which is lapped over and secured to the free edge 66 of the upper wall or panel 64. A similar strip 71 is lapped over and secured to the upper free edge of the bottom pocket wall or panel 65 along the full length thereof and securely holds in place a frame member or bar 72 which extends between the flaps 62 and 63 along the free edge 67 of the pocket wall 65.

The frame bar 72 is substantially identical to the frame bar 54 of the luggage tray or garment container 40. Also, frame bars 73 and 74, substantially identical to frame bars 50 and 51, are secured between the two thicknesses of the flaps 62 and 63, respectively, and along the secured together edges of the central pocketed section 61 where the same is secured to the flaps 62 and 63. These frame bars 73 and 74 extend for the full height of the luggage tray 60 and the frame bar 72 extends for the full distance therebetween. An additional pair of frame bars 75 and 76 of the same length as the bars 73 and 74 are disposed along the lateral free edges of the flaps 62 and 63, respectively, between the thicknesses of material of those flaps and parallel to the bars 73 and 74.

From the foregoing detailed description it may be seen that the frame bars of the luggage tray or garment container 60 are substantially identical in their placement relation to the luggage tray or garment container 60 as the frame bars are disposed about the luggage tray or garment container 40. So, too, the frame bars of the luggage tray 60 preferably should not be secured together directly since to do so would seriously reduce the flexibility of the unit. Thus, the frame bars 72, 73 and 74 about the central pocketed section 61 are secured thereto by such convenient means as sewing stitches 77, it being understood, of course, that any other convenient securing means may be employed. The bars 75 and 76 are also secured in place preferably by sewing stitches.

Returning now to the embodiment of the present invention viewed in Figure 1 in combination with a luggage unit such as a suitcase or the like, the luggage tray or garment container 20 having a central pocketed section 21 and side flaps 22 and 23 may be formed either as the luggage tray or garment container 40 or as the luggage tray or garment container 60 are formed. In addition, however, supplementary pocket panels 24 and 25, which are preferably square or rectangular in configuration and formed of a translucent or transparent material, are secured to the upper pocket wall or panel 26 of the central pocketed section 21 in such a manner that they are each secured preferably along three sides thereof, leaving free pocket front access edges 27 and 28, respectively. These supplementary pockets or pocket panels are not limited in their number but are designed to provide convenient supplementary pockets for the storage or safe placement of smaller articles of apparel than those which are more conveniently placed in the larger pocket of the pocketed section 41 and are transparent to facilitate convenient identification of articles disposed therein.

A luggage tray or garment container embodying the principles of the present invention may have articles of apparel or other articles conveniently placed therein simply by spreading the free pocket access edges of the central pocketed section of the tray and/or raising the pocket access edges of the supplementary pockets, thus opening the pocket or container section for disposition of the article therein. Once the tray or container has the number of articles desired placed therein, simple grasping and lifting of the flaps or closure panels along the frame rod at the lateral extremities thereof provides a convenient lifting and carrying means which allows free disposition of the flexible tray in the luggage unit. Once so placed, other articles may be placed or packed on top of the tray and the closure flaps are folded over onto the upper surface thereof and along the line of fold defined by the frame members along the secured-together edges of the central pocketed section, thus protecting the garments on top of the tray unit from catching or snagging in the opening of the luggage unit. By virtue of their position in the luggage tray and the manner in which they are secured to the luggage tray but not to each other the frame members maintain the tray in proper form while the same is being carried or placed in the suitcase or being taken from the suitcase, and thus support the tray unit and articles therein and thereon while the luggage is being carried.

Because of the flexibility of luggage trays embodying the principles of the present invention when the tray is placed over other articles which have been loosely packed in the suitcase, it will conform to the general contour of the upper surface of the several articles packed thereunder. So, too, several luggage trays embodying the principles of the present invention may be filled with various articles and placed one over another within the suit case.

To remove the luggage tray from the luggage unit involves the very simple task of lifting the tray by the frame-bars at the lateral free edge extremities of the flaps and removing the tray to another desired place such as a table top or shelf or bureau drawer.

Thus, there is provided by the present invention a light weight, flexible, convenient and easy to use luggage tray having the numerous advantages and construction features spelled out above along with other advantages and features which are apparent but not spelled out.

It is understood, of course, that numerous variations and modifications may be made without departing from the true spirit and scope of the present invention and that the foregoing detailed description and accompanying drawings describe and illustrate only preferred embodiments of the present invention and incorporate the novel concepts thereof.

I claim as my invention:

1. A garment container of flexible construction comprising a central pocket portion having an upper wall and a lower wall, a pair of flap members secured to opposite edges of said pocket portion, and a plurality of frame members free of each other, independently secured to said pocket portion walls and to said flap members and disposed thereabout to maintain the shape of said pocket portion without impairing the flexibility thereof, at least two of said frame members being secured to said pocket portion and said flap members along the opposite edges of said pocket portion where said flap members are secured thereto.

2. A garment container for free disposition in an article of luggage as a flexible luggage tray therefor comprising a first pair of superimposed panels of flexible material secured together along less than all of the edges of at least one of said panels, the unsecured edges providing means for access to the pocketed space between said pair of panels, a second pair of panels of flexible material, said second pair of panels each of a length substantially the same as the width of said one of said first pair of panels and of a width not more than half of the length of said one of said first pair of panels and each of said second pair of panels secured to opposite secured together edges of said first pair of panels and extending laterally outwardly from at least the other of said first pair of panels, and a plurality of frame members independently secured to said first pair of panels and said second pair of panels and so disposed thereabout as to maintain the shape of the garment container without impairing the flexibility thereof.

3. A garment container for free disposition in an article of luggage as a flexible luggage tray therefor comprising a first pair of superimposed substantially rectangular panels of flexible material secured together along less than all of the edges thereof, the unsecured edges providing means for access to pocketed space between said pair of panels, a second pair of panels of flexible material, said second pair of panels secured to opposite secured together edges of said first pair of panels and a plurality of frame members independently secured to said first pair of panels and said second pair of panels and so disposed thereabout as to maintain the shape of said pocket portion without impairing the flexibility thereof, at least two of said frame members being secured to said first pair of panels and

said second pair of panels along the opposite secured together edges where said first pair of panels is secured to said second pair of panels.

4. A garment container for free disposition in an article of luggage as a flexible luggage tray therefor comprising a first pair of superimposed substantially rectangular panels of flexible material secured together along less than all of the edges thereof, the unsecured edges providing means for access to pocketed space between said pair of panels, flexible means secured along said secured together edges between said first pair of panels, a second pair of panels of flexible material, said second pair of panels secured to opposite secured together edges of said first pair of panels and a plurality of frame members independently secured to said first pair of panels and said second pair of panels and so disposed thereabout as to maintain the shape of said pocket portion without impairing the flexibility thereof, at least two of said frame members being secured to said first pair of panels and said second pair of panels along the opposite secured together edges where said first pair of panels is secured to said second pair of panels.

5. A garment container for free disposition in an article of luggage as a flexible luggage tray therefor comprising a first pair of superimposed substantially rectangular panels of flexible material secured together along less than all of the edges thereof, the unsecured edges providing means for access to pocketed space between said pair of panels, a second pair of panels of flexible material, said second pair of panels secured to opposite secured together edges of said first pair of panels and a plurality of frame members independently secured to said first pair of panels and said second pair of panels and so disposed thereabout as to maintain the shape of said pocket portion without impairing the flexibility thereof, at least two of said frame members being secured to said first pair of panels and said second pair of panels along the opposite secured together edges where said first pair of panels is secured to said second pair of panels, and an additional panel member substantially smaller than said first pair of panels secured along less than all of its edges to the outer surface of one of the panels of said first pair of panels.

6. A garment container for free disposition in an article of luggage as a flexible luggage tray therefor comprising a first pair of superimposed substantially rectangular panels of flexible material secured together along less than all of the edges thereof, the unsecured edges providing means for access to pocketed space between said pair of panels, a second pair of panels of flexible material, said second pair of panels secured to opposite secured together edges of said first pair of panels and a plurality of frame members independently secured to said first pair of panels and said second pair of panels and so disposed thereabout as to maintain the shape of said pocket portion without impairing the flexibility thereof, at least two of said frame members being secured to said first pair of panels and said second pair of panels along the opposite secured together edges where said first pair of panels is secured to said second pair of panels, said first pair of panels being comprised of a single sheet of flexible material folded over to provide said first pair of panels.

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