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(54) **Title:** BACKBOARD WITH INTEGRATED HANGER FOR USE WITH A PICTURE FRAME OR DISPLAY CASE

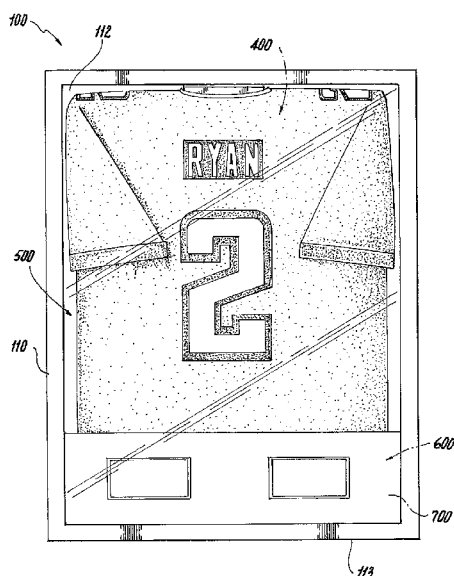


Fig. 1

(57) **Abstract:** A backboard for use with a display case or picture frame is formed to include an integrated hanger structure for displaying an article of clothing. The backboard includes a substrate that includes a top edge. The substrate has a first section and a second section that extends outwardly away from one edge of the first section. The second section is pivotally attached to the first section to allow at least a portion of the second section to overlie the first section. The second section includes a crossbar that is configured to be received within and support the article of clothing to allow display thereof.

BACKBOARD WITH INTEGRATED HANGER FOR USE WITH A PICTURE FRAME OR DISPLAY CASE

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Technical Field

The present invention relates to display cases and picture frames for displaying items and in particular, to a backboard for use therewith that has an integrated hanger for displaying an article of clothing.

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Background

A picture frame or display is a housing or structure for an item, such as a picture, (e.g., painting or photograph) intended to enhance it, make it easier to display, and/or protect it. Varieties of picture frame structures are in use today or have been suggested for use. Picture frames can come in any number of different shapes and can be formed from any number of different materials. The most common shape of a frame is a rectangle; however, frames can come in other shapes, such as square or oval, etc. Display cases can be similar to picture frames; however, they serve to display an item, such as a collectable, etc.

One of the biggest areas of personal memorabilia is the area of collecting sports memorabilia. In addition, to the individual personal collectors who collect

memorabilia of their cherished players, there is also a large industry that has blossomed around sports memorabilia. For example, there are a vast number of companies that sell sports memorabilia. One of the more common items that is collected as sports memorabilia is autographed sports equipment. For example, autographed baseballs and autographed footballs are some of the more popular items of sports memorabilia. In addition, other pieces of equipment, such as jerseys, can be autographed and collected.

In addition to the display of sports jerseys, uniforms of the armed services are also often protected and displayed in some type of display structure. In addition, other articles of clothing can be displayed. Unfortunately, most displays are not intended to receive and securely hold and display an article of clothing, such as a jersey, and therefore, there is a need to provide a display that is constructed to overcome the above shortcomings of conventional displays.

Summary

In accordance with one embodiment, a backboard for use with a display case or picture frame is formed to include an integrated hanger structure for displaying an article of clothing. The backboard includes a substrate that includes a top edge. The substrate has a first section and a second section that extends outwardly away from one edge of the first section. The second section is pivotally attached to the first section to allow at least a portion of the second section to overlies the first section.

The second section includes a cross-bar that is configured to be received within and support the article of clothing to allow display thereof.

In another embodiment, a display case or picture frame includes the above-described backboard and further includes a plurality of moulding pieces that are
5 coupled to one another so as to define an enclosed display space. The backboard engages the moulding pieces and provides a support for artwork, etc.

The backboard with the integrated hanger feature is particularly suited for the display of an article of clothing, such as a sports jersey or other shirt, or military attire, such as a military uniform. However, it will be appreciated that the article of clothing
10 can be an item besides one of the ones mentioned herein. For example, a jacket, sweater, dress, T-shirt, etc. can likewise be displayed.

These and other aspects, features and advantages shall be apparent from the accompanying Drawings and description of certain embodiments of the invention.

15 Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a front elevation view of a display case with a backboard having an integrated hanger in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a front elevation view of the backboard in a planar position for shipment or storage; and

Fig. 3 is a front perspective view of the backboard in an in-use position with the hanger feature in a pivoted position.

Detailed Description of Certain Embodiments of the Invention

5 A display case can include many of the same components that are used in manufacturing a picture frame. For example, both a display case and picture frame typically are formed of pieces of moulding. Moulding can be simply thought of as a finished strip of wood, metal, or polystyrene carved or formed into decorative ornamentation used for making each of the four sides of the case or picture frame. A
10 mountboard is commonly understood to mean the solid piece of matboard directly behind the artwork to which is float-mounted. A backboard is commonly understood to mean the solid piece of acid free foamboard directly behind the mountboard which as a protective backing to the finished piece and serves to support the artwork (e.g., a painting). Foamboard is what is often used as the backboard since it does not
15 warp and is lightweight. Foamboard or foam core is a very strong, lightweight and easily cut material used for the mounting of photographic prints, as backing in picture framing, in 3D design, and in painting. It typically consists of three layers — an inner layer of polystyrene clad with outer facing of either a white claycoated paper or brown Kraft paper . Matboard is another item that is typically used in picture frames
20 and/or display cases and is a piece of acid-free board in which an opening is cut to

create a border around the artwork. Matting also helps to elevate glass from the artwork, allowing airing of any moisture.

Fig. 1 shows an exemplary display case 100 that includes pieces of moulding 110 that are coupled to one another and arranged so as to form an interior space 112. The illustrated display case 100 has a rectangular shape; however, the display case 100 can be formed to have any number of different shapes, including square, oval, etc. As with conventional display cases, the display case includes a backboard 200 that is securely coupled to the moulding 110 and provides support for the artwork. For convenience, the present invention is discussed in terms of being a display case; however, it will be appreciated that it can likewise be expressed in being some other type of structure that performs the same function.

As shown in Figs. 2-3, the backboard 200 according to the present invention includes an integrated feature that permits an article of clothing 400 to be displayed within the interior space 112. The backboard 200 includes a first section 210 and a second section 220 that is coupled to the first section 210. The second section 220 is thus an extension from the first section 210 and extends outwardly from an edge thereof. In particular, the second section 220 extends from a top edge 212 of the first section 210. The first section 210 represents the main section of the backboard 200 that is constructed to engage and be coupled to the moulding 110. The illustrated backboard 200 has a rectangular shape.

As discussed herein, the article of clothing 400 can be any number of different types of clothing including but not limited to: a shirt, blouse, a jacket, sweater, dress, a uniform, a sports jersey, a coat, etc.

5 The second section 220 is configured to provide a means for displaying an article of clothing by hanging the article of clothing within the interior space 112. In one embodiment, as illustrated, the second section 220 is shaped similar to a garment hanger. The second section 220 is pivotable relative to the first section 210 and is capable of pivoting between a planar position (shipping or storage position) in
10 which the second section 220 does not overlie the first section 210 and a second position where the second section 220 does overlie the first section 210. This second position represents an in-use position in which an article of clothing is displayed within the space 112.

 When the first and second sections 210, 220 are part of a single piece and
15 thus integral to one another, the pivoting nature of the second section 220 can be incorporated by forming one or more weakened sections about which the second section 220 pivots. For example, a score can be formed in the backboard 200 at a location in which the second section 220 is desired to pivot relative to the first section 210. In the illustrated embodiment, the second section 220 includes a plurality of
20 scores as discussed in detail below. The score lines define fold lines that permit the

substrate material to easily fold thereabout and space the cross-bar 224 from the first section 210.

When the second section 220 has a garment hanger shape, the second section 220 is formed of a neck portion 222 and a cross-bar 224. The neck portion 222 is the portion that connects the cross-bar 224 to the first section 210. As shown in Fig. 2, the neck portion 222 can include a first score (fold line) 223 and a second score (fold line) 225. The first score 223 can be slightly below the top edge 212 of the first section 210 and the second score 225 can be slightly above the top edge 212 of the first section 210. It will be appreciated that when the first score 223 is present, vertical slits are formed at the ends of the first score 223 to the top edge 212.

One feature of the present invention is that when two score lines 223, 225 are present and the second section 220 is folded relative to the first section 210, a U-shaped structure can be formed. In the U-shaped configuration, the second section 220 is at least substantially parallel to the first section 210 but the second section 220 is spaced thereapart to accommodate an article of clothing that is wider in size.

The cross-bar 224 has a greater width than the neck portion 222 and thus extends laterally therebeyond. As with conventional garment hangers, the cross-bar 224 is designed to support an article of clothing by being received within the article of clothing. The cross-bar 224 thus has a first end 226 and an opposing second end 227. The ends 226, 227 can be planar or rounded, as shown, in shape. In the

illustrated embodiment, the cross-bar 224 has a planar top edge 228 and an angled or curved bottom edge 229 that joins the planar top edge 228 at the ends 226, 227.

Fig. 2 illustrates that the planar top edge 228 can include an extension or protrusion 230 that extends outwardly from the top edge 228 at an intermediate portion thereof. The top edge 228 thus has one planar top edge portion on one side of the protrusion 230 and another planar top edge portion on the other side of the protrusion. The protrusion 230 has a rounded free edge 232. The protrusion 230 can support a portion (center neckline) of the article of clothing to promote display.

The cross-bar 224 also includes additional weakened sections to permit it to be easily folded and in particular, the cross-bar 224 also includes a first vertical score 240 and a second vertical score 242. The first vertical score 240 is formed between the protrusion 230 and the first end 226 and the second vertical score 242 is formed between the protrusion 230 and the second end 227. The first and second vertical scores 240, 242 are at least substantially parallel to one another and are at least substantially perpendicular to the scores 223, 225. The first and second vertical scores 240, 242 are designed to permit end portions of the cross-bar 224 to be folded inwardly toward the center of the cross-bar 224 (toward the protrusion 230 and the extension 220) so as to allow insertion of the cross-bar 224 into the neckline of the garment.

In one example, the distance between the planar top edge 228 to the top edge 212 of the first section 210 is about 4.25 inches and the neck portion 222 has a

height of about 1 inch. The cross-bar 224 has a length of about 21 inches from the first end 226 to the second end 227.

The backboard 200 can be formed of any number of suitable materials that are conventional used for backboards. For example, the backboard 200 can be
5 formed of foamboard. As discussed above, foamboard is commonly used as a backboard and offers a number of advantageous properties, including that it does not warp and is lightweight.

The display case 100 typically also includes an outer protective member, such as a sheet of glass or acrylic member 500 that is disposed over the artwork. The
10 display case 100 can also include other areas, generally indicated at 600, in which other relative objects, including memorabilia, can be displayed. For example, as shown in Fig. 1, a matboard section or strip 700 can be provided along a bottom edge 113 of the display case to permit photos and documents, etc., to be displayed.

As described above, the second section 220 which forms the integrated
15 hanger feature of the backboard pivots between a planar position (shipping and storage position), shown in Fig. 2, and an in-use position, shown in Fig. 3, in which the second section 220 does not lie in the same plane as the first section 210. In the in-use position of Fig. 3, the second section 220 at least partially overlies the first section 210 to permit the article of clothing to securely and effectively be hung within
20 the display case. It will be appreciated that in the pivoted position, such as Fig. 3,

the second (hanger) section 220 is still underneath the protective member (glass sheet) 600.

The sections of the backboard can be manufactured using conventional techniques, including using a diecut process such that the second section 220
5 represents a hanger structure that is diecut as an extension of the backboard back panel (first section 210).

One of the advantage of the backboard of the present invention is that, as shown in Fig. 1, the integrated hanger (second section 220) is nearly invisible when the article of clothing is displayed by receiving the second section 220 through the
10 neckline of the article of clothing so as to position the cross-bar 224 along the shoulder portions of the article of clothing.

In accordance with the present invention, the backboard includes an integrated hanger feature that is an appendage (extension or arm) of the main section of the backboard. The appendage/extension is cut to have a shape of a
15 typical garment hanger that is scored to fold within the display case and further includes two additional scores. The additional scores (fold lines) allow the hanger to reduce in size in order to pass through the neckline of the garment.

While the invention has been described in connection with certain embodiments thereof, the invention is capable of being practiced in other forms and
20 using other materials and structures. Accordingly, the invention is defined by the recitations in the claims appended hereto and equivalents thereof.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A backboard having an integrated hanger structure for displaying an article of clothing in a display case comprising:

a substrate that includes a top edge, wherein the substrate has a first section and
5 a second section that extends outwardly away from one edge of the first section, the second section being pivotally attached to the first section to allow at least a portion of the second section to overlie the first section, the second section including a cross-bar that is configured to be received within and support the article of clothing to allow display thereof.

10 2. The backboard of claim 1, wherein the substrate comprises foamboard.

3. The backboard of claim 1, wherein the first section has a rectangular shape and the one edge comprises a top edge.

4. The backboard of claim 1, wherein the first and second sections are integral to one another.

15 5. The backboard of claim 1, wherein the second section includes a neck portion that connects the cross-bar to the first section, the neck portion having a length that is less than a length of the cross-bar.

6. The backboard of claim 5, wherein the neck portion includes at least one score to permit the neck portion to be pivoted relative to the first section.

7. The backboard of claim 1, wherein the cross-bar includes a pair of scores formed therein to permit end portions of the cross-bar to fold therealong.

8. The backboard of claim 1, wherein the cross-bar is an elongated member that is connected to the one edge of the first section by a neck portion, the neck
5 portion partitioning the cross-bar into a first leg that extends toward a first side edge of the first section and a second leg that extends toward a second side edge of the first section, the first and second legs being spaced from the one edge of the first section.

9. A display case having an integrated hanger structure for displaying an
10 article of clothing comprising:

a plurality of moulding pieces that are coupled to one another so as to define an enclosed display space; and

a backboard that is coupled to the moulding pieces to defines a support surface, the backboard including a top edge, wherein the backboard has a first section and a
15 second section that extends outwardly away from one edge of the first section, the second section being pivotally attached to the first section to allow at least a portion of the second section to overlie the first section, the second section including a cross-bar that is configured to be received within and support the article of clothing to allow display thereof within the display space.

10. The display case of claim 9, wherein the article of clothing is one of a sports jersey and a military uniform.

11. The display case of claim 9, wherein the substrate comprises foamboard.

12. The display case of claim 9, wherein the first section has a rectangular shape and the one edge comprises a top edge.

13. The display case of claim 9, wherein the first and second sections are integral to one another.

14. The display case of claim 9, wherein the second section includes a neck portion that connects the cross-bar to the first section, the neck portion having a length that is less than a length of the cross-bar.

15. The display case of claim 14, wherein the neck portion includes at least one score to permit the neck portion to be pivoted relative to the first section.

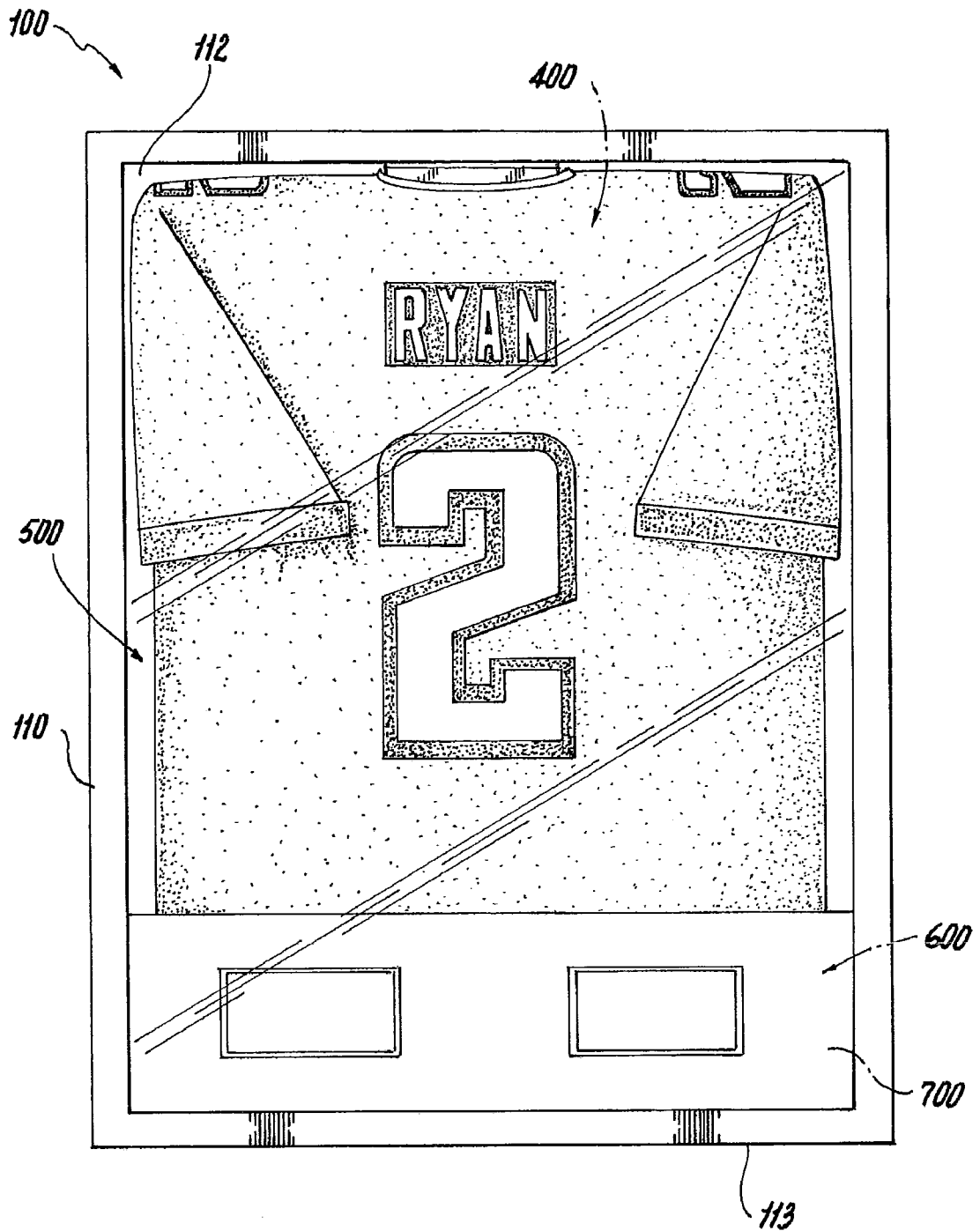
16. The display case of claim 9, wherein the cross-bar includes a pair of scores formed therein to permit end portions of the cross-bar to fold therealong.

17. The display case of claim 9, wherein the cross-bar is an elongated member that is connected to the one edge of the first section by a neck portion, the neck portion partitioning the cross-bar into a first leg that extends toward a first side edge of the first section and a second leg that extends toward a second side edge of the first section, the first and second legs being spaced from the one edge of the first section.

18. A backboard having an integrated hanger structure for displaying an article of clothing in a display case comprising:

a substrate that includes a top edge, wherein the substrate has a first section in the form of a panel and a second section that extends outwardly away from a top edge of the panel, the second section including a cross-bar and a connector section that connects the cross-bar to the panel, the cross-bar being constructed to support and display the article of clothing, the connector section including a first score that is located below the top edge of the panel when the second section extends outwardly from the panel but lies in the same plane, the connector section having a second score formed therein and located between the first score and the cross-bar, wherein the second section can be folded about the first and second score to place the second section in a folded position in which the cross-bar is at substantially parallel to the panel but is spaced therefrom.

19. The backboard of claim 18, wherein the panel includes a pair of slits formed at ends of the first score, the slits extending from the first score to the top edge of the panel to permit a portion of the connector section to be at least substantially perpendicular to the panel and the cross-bar in the folded position.

**Fig. 1**

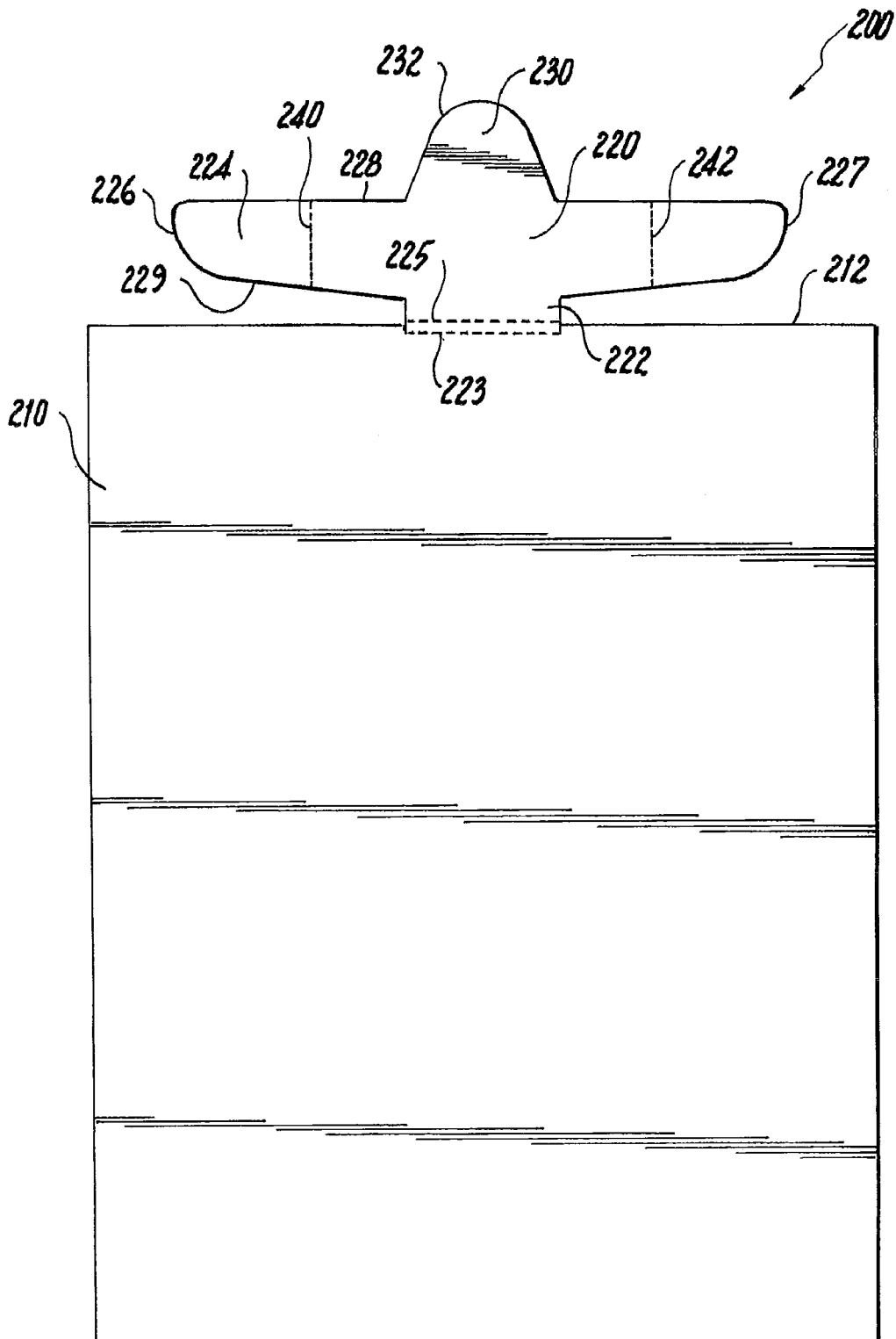


Fig. 2

Fig. 3