No. 840,332. PATENTED JAN. 1, 1907.

J. W. HOWARD & R. M. McKEE.

INDEX CELL CASE EQUIPMENT FOR DELIVERY OF MAIL.

APPLICATION FILED MAR. 20, 1905.

3 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

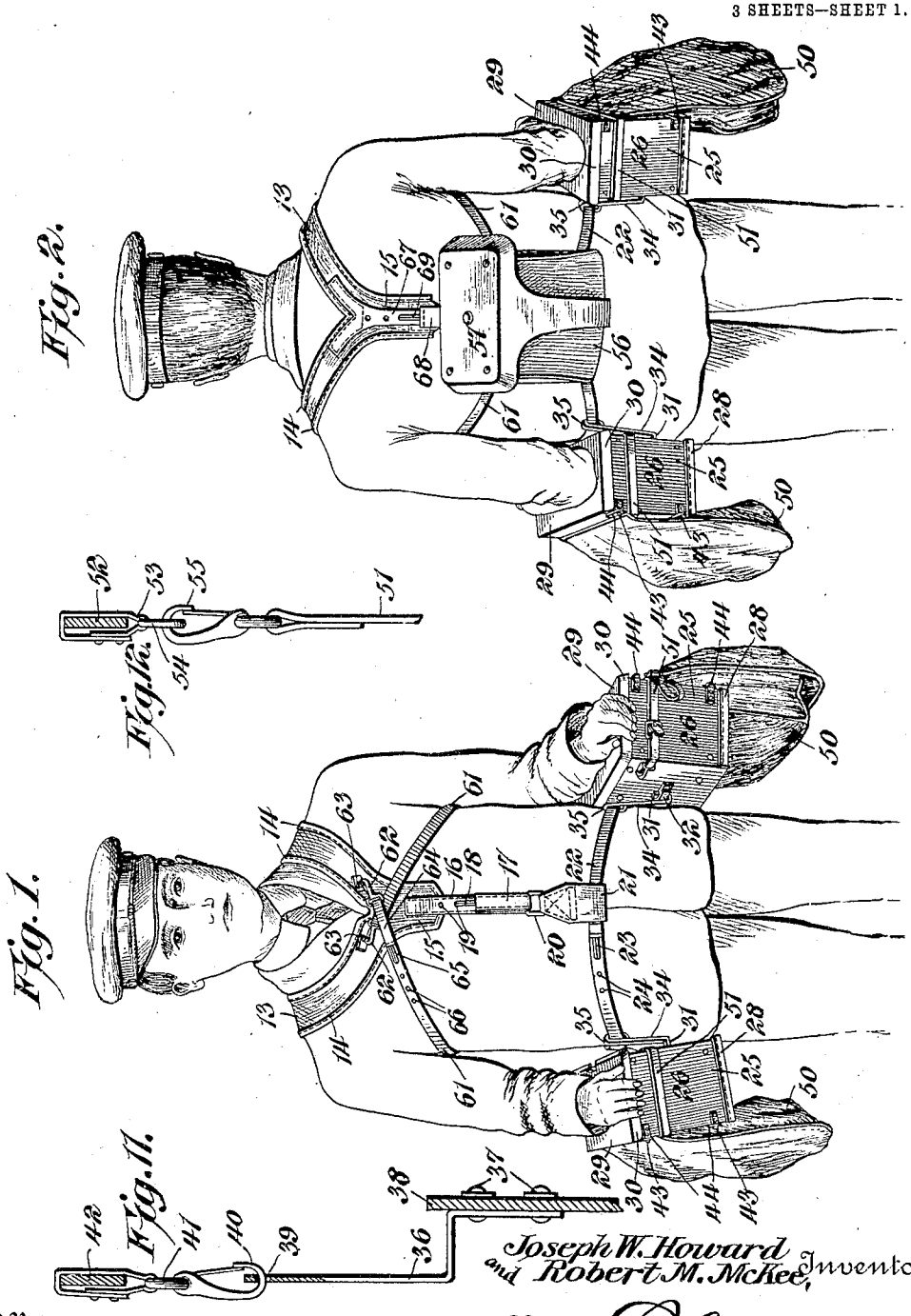

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

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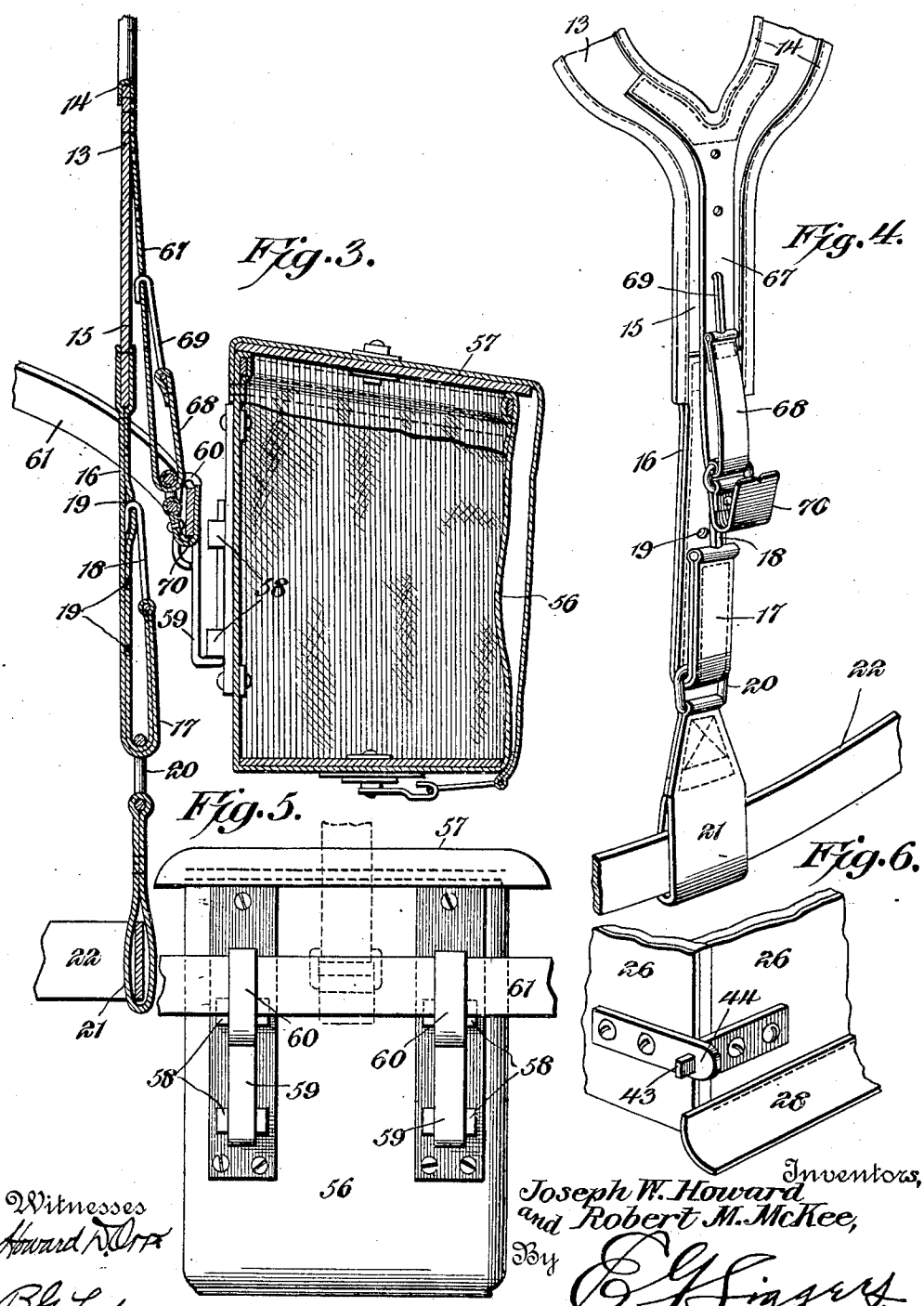

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3 SHEETS—SHEET 3.

Fig. 7.

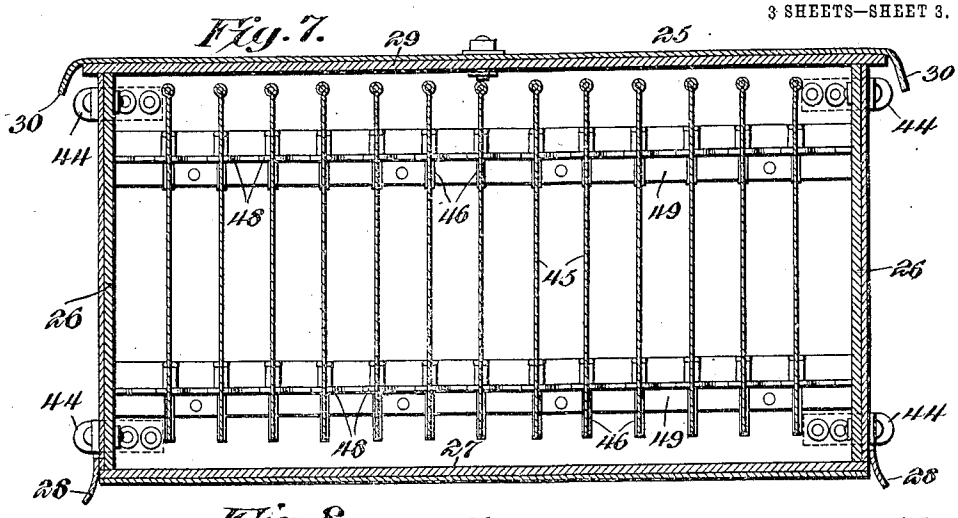


Fig. 8.

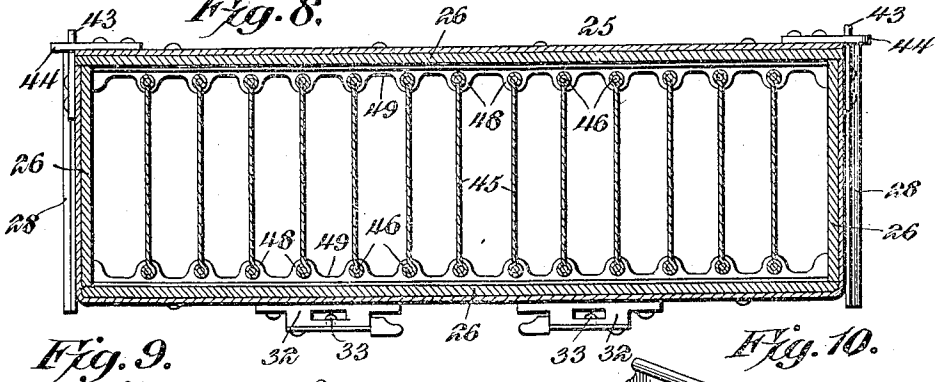


Fig. 9.

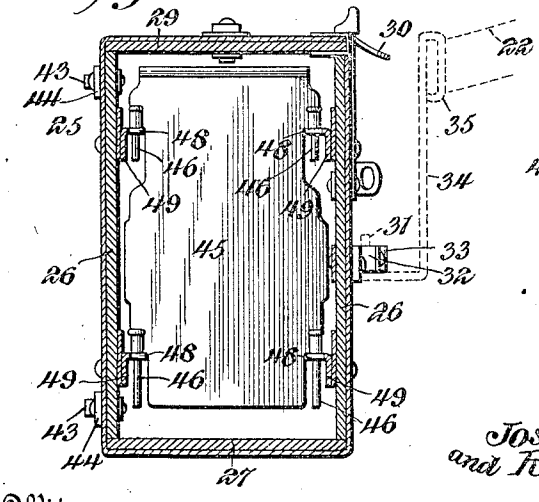
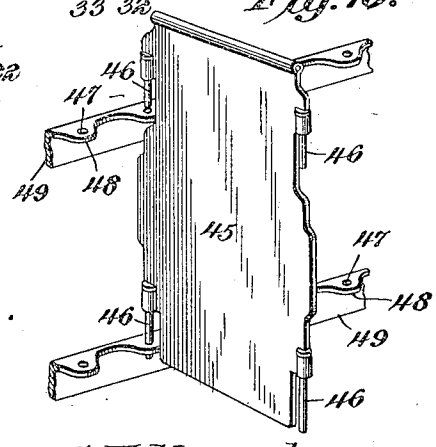


Fig. 10.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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INDEX CELL-CASE EQUIPMENT FOR DELIVERY OF MAIL.

No. 840,332. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Jan. 1, 1907.

Application filed March 20, 1905. Serial No. 251,175.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, JOSEPH W. HOWARD and ROBERT M. McKEE, citizens of the United States, residing at Greeneville, in the county of Greene and State of Tennessee, have invented a new and useful Index Cell-Case Equipment for Delivery of Mail, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates more particularly to means for carrying mail while the same is being delivered. It is in the nature of improvements on the structure illustrated and described in a prior patent granted to us on July 26, 1904, and numbered 765,893.

One of the objects is to provide a novel form of supporting harness or gear, which can be more conveniently applied and removed, is more comfortable upon the wearer, is readily adjustable, and permits of easy access to the mail-holding receptacles and the detachment and replacement thereof, if the same becomes necessary or desirable.

A further object is to provide a novel structure of index cell-case, which is inexpensive to manufacture, is readily assembled, is convenient of access and has compartments, the size of which can be varied.

Another object is to provide a hutch for exigency or emergency purposes, which hutch under ordinary conditions is not needed and may be detached, and to employ novel means of a simple nature for properly suspending the said hutch from the harness.

Still another object is to provide an equipment that will be comparatively light in weight and when in position will not materially interfere with the ordinary movements of the postman or carrier.

An embodiment of the invention that is at present considered preferable is illustrated in the accompanying drawings and is described in the following specification.

An inspection of the claims hereto appended will clearly indicate that the invention is not limited solely to the structure herein set forth.

In the embodiment illustrated, Figure 1 is a front perspective view of the equipment applied to a wearer. Fig. 2 is a rear view of the same. Fig. 3 is a vertical sectional view, on an enlarged scale, through the rear portion of the harness and showing the hutch. Fig. 4 is a detail perspective view of this portion of said harness. Fig. 5 is a rear elevation of the hutch. Fig. 6 is a detail perspective view of the lower corner of one of the cell-cases. Fig. 7 is a longitudinal sectional view through one of the cell-cases. Fig. 8 is a horizontal sectional view therethrough. Fig. 9 is a vertical cross-sectional view through the same. Fig. 10 is a detail perspective view of one of the partitions and portions of the holding-strips. Fig. 11 is a detail sectional view showing a slightly-modified form of attachment between one of the cell-cases and the body-strap. Fig. 12 is a detail sectional view illustrating the means for suspending one of the pouches directly from the body-strap.

Similar reference-numerals designate corresponding parts in all the figures of the drawings.

In the embodiment illustrated a neck-yoke is employed, comprising broad shoulder-straps 13, having their edges bound, as shown at 14, said straps being connected at their front and rear ends and having depending terminals 15. To each of these terminals is secured one end of a depending strap 16, that is looped, as shown at 17, the other terminal of said strap having a hook 18, adapted to be engaged in any of a series of openings 19, formed in the strap. The loops 17 of the straps 16 support eyes 20, from which are suspended broad stirrups 21, that are of leather or other suitable material, and passing through these stirrups is a body-strap 22, that is adjustable, one end being provided with a hook 23, adapted to be engaged in the openings 24 of said strap.

In the embodiment illustrated a pair of cell-cases 25 are shown supported from the body-strap and located on opposite sides of the wearer. The number of these cell-cases is of course not material, and in case of a small delivery but one may be employed. Each case is preferably, though not necessarily, formed of leather, and comprises folding side and end walls 26 and a bottom 27. These walls have their adjacent margins abutted and preferably covered with suitable flaps, as 28, to prevent the entrance of water. A cover 29 is hinged to the outer edge of each case and is also provided with suitable flaps 30 to protect the joints. The means for connecting the cell-cases to the strap may be the

same as that set forth in the prior patent—namely, hooks 31, engaging in socket-pieces 32, carried by the inner walls and held in place by latches 33, carried by said socket-pieces and engaging the hooks. The hooks have shanks 34, provided at their upper ends with eyes 35, through which the body-strap suitably passes.

Instead of this structure that illustrated in Fig. 11 may be employed, wherein a shank 36 is riveted, as shown at 37, to the inner wall 38 of the cell-case and has an eye 39 at its upper end. This eye receives a snap-hook 40, pivoted to a loop 41, that is slidable upon the body-strap shown at 42.

The cell-cases are preferably constructed as shown in Figs. 7 to 10. The adjacent inner margins of the side walls are provided with projecting tongues 43, that are received in socket-pieces 44, projecting from the end edges of the inner side wall, and the cell-cases are held against collapsing by a series of partitions 45, extending across the spaces between the side walls and having at their opposite side edges vertically-disposed upper and lower sets of pins 46, spaced from the edges, which are inset to allow for the same, said pins being received in sockets 47, formed in the inwardly-extending ears 48 of upper and lower holding-strips 49, secured to the side walls. It will be observed particularly by reference to Fig. 3 that the lower pins are longer than the upper pins, so that they may be introduced into their sockets before the upper ones enter the upper sockets, and thus the partitions may be readily placed in position. Moreover, they can be easily removed, and thus the compartments may be as large as desirable.

As is the case in the structure described in the prior patent, pouches 50 may be employed that are carried directly by the cell-cases, these pouches having straps 51, by means of which they are attached to said cases, the said attachments being substantially the same as those described in the said previous patent. Instead of this arrangement the pouches may, if desired, be suspended directly from the body-strap, and a modification of this sort is illustrated in Fig. 12. The body-strap is shown at 52, and slidably mounted thereon is an eye 53, from which is pivotally suspended a link 54. The link receives a snap-hook 55, to which one of the pouch-straps can be secured.

For ordinary purposes the equipment above described will be sufficient; but in the case of an abnormal amount of mail to be delivered an emergency-hutch 56 is employed having a suitable cover 57, this hutch being provided with spaced keepers 58, that receive hooks 59, having at their free ends eyes 60. The eyes are slidably mounted upon a hutch-supporting strap 61, arranged to surround the body of the wearer and carrying terminal snap-hooks 62 at their ends, which hooks detachably engage eyes 63, located on the front of the neck-yoke, the ends being crossed, as illustrated in Fig. 1. The strap is adjustable in length, one of the terminals being looped, as shown at 64, and having a hook 65, adapted to be engaged in any of a series of openings 66 in the strap. The hutch is located at the back, but is slidable upon the hutch-supporting strap 61 around beneath either arm of the wearer, so that access can be gained thereto. In order to assist in holding the said hutch at the back and relieve the binding strain upon the strap 61, a supplemental support is employed comprising a strap 67, secured at its upper end to the rear portion of the neck-yoke and looped, as shown at 68, one of the terminals of said strap having a hook 69, that adjustably engages said strap. A broad open hook 70, suspended from the loop 68, is adapted to engage beneath the hutch-supporting strap 61 between the hooks 59, and thus the strain of the weight of the hutch is divided between the front and rear ends of the neck-yoke. This hook can be easily engaged with or disengaged from the strap 61 by the bearer, who has only to reach rearwardly and elevate the strap.

The harness or gear herein set forth can be readily applied and detached from the wearer, has all its parts adjustable, so that it may be properly fitted, and thus be made entirely comfortable, and permits of convenient access to all the receptacles. In use each compartment will contain the amount of mail for a certain "stage" or distance—for instance, in city delivery of a block, or in rural delivery of a mile. In case any one of the compartments is not of sufficient size a partition may be removed, thus leaving double the space. Packages, newspapers, and bulky articles will be carried in the pouches, and memoranda thereof can be placed in the proper compartments of the cell-cases, so that any danger of overlooking such articles will be avoided. Moreover, each cell-case with its appendant pouch may and preferably is employed exclusively for containing the mail to be delivered to the side of the route on which such case is located. In case of an abnormal amount of mail the hutch is employed. It is entirely out of the way until the contents of the cell-cases and pouches have been disposed of, after which the said hutch can be drawn to a convenient position and the matter distributed therefrom. On the other hand, if the amount of mail is so small as not to warrant the employment of a pair of cell-cases but one need be employed, and this may be located in front instead of at the side. It will thus be seen that the particular arrangement of the various receptacles may be varied to suit the personal desires of the carrier or postman.

Having thus described our invention, what we claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a neck-yoke comprising neck-embracing shoulder-straps connected at their front and rear ends, of a body-strap suspended from the front and rear ends of the neck-yoke, mail-holding means arranged on the body-strap, a hutch-supporting strap located above the body-strap and having its ends detachably connected to the front end of the neck-yoke, a detachable supporting connection between an intermediate portion of the hutch-supporting strap and the rear end of the yoke, and a hutch adjustably mounted on the hutch-supporting strap.

2. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a neck-yoke comprising neck-embracing shoulder-straps connected at their front and rear ends, of a continuous body-embracing hutch-supporting strap having an adjustable connection at its ends with the front end of the neck-yoke, said strap extending rearwardly beneath the rear end of the neck-yoke, and a hutch slidably mounted on the strap.

3. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a neck-yoke, of a continuous hutch-supporting strap having a detachable connection at its ends with the front portion of the neck-yoke and extending beneath the rear portion of the same, a support detachably connecting the rear portion of the neck-yoke and the rear portion of the strap, and a hutch carried by the strap and normally mounted on the rear portion thereof, said hutch being slidable toward the ends of the strap.

4. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a neck-yoke comprising neck-embracing straps, of a continuous hutch-supporting strap having its ends crossed and detachably connected to the front portion of the neck-yoke, and a hutch slidably mounted on the straps and normally located beneath the rear portion of the neck-yoke.

5. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a neck-yoke, of a body-surrounding hutch-supporting strap, snap-hooks carried by the ends of the strap and detachably connecting the same to the front of the neck-yoke, said ends being crossed, and a hutch supported by said strap and slidable thereupon.

6. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a supporting device, of a hutch, a body-surrounding hutch-supporting strap connected to the supporting device and to one portion of the hutch, and supplemental supporting means located adjacent to the hutch and connected to said supporting device.

7. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a neck-yoke, of a hutch, a body-surrounding hutch-supporting strap connected to one end of the neck-yoke, and supplemental supporting means disposed adjacent to the hutch and connected to the other end of said neck-yoke.

8. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a neck-yoke, of a hutch, a body-surrounding hutch-supporting strap connected to the hutch and to the front end of the yoke, and a supplemental strap detachably connected to the hutch-supporting strap and also connected to the rear end of the neck-yoke.

9. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a neck-yoke, of a hutch-supporting strap having its ends detachably connected to the front end of the neck-yoke, a hutch slidably supported on the strap, a supplemental supporting-strap connected to the rear end of the neck-yoke, and a hook carried by the supplemental strap and arranged to detachably engage the hutch-supporting strap contiguous to the hutch.

10. In an equipment of the class described, the combination with a neck-yoke, of depending straps secured to the ends thereof, stirrups suspended from said straps, a body-strap engaged in the stirrups, mail-holding receptacles connected to the body-strap, a hutch-supporting strap having ends detachably connected to the front end of the neck-yoke, a hutch having spaced loops slidably engaging the hutch-supporting strap, and a hook suspended from the rear end of the neck-yoke and arranged to detachably engage the hutch-supporting strap between the loops.

In testimony that we claim the foregoing as our own we have hereto affixed our signatures in the presence of two witnesses.

JOSEPH W. HOWARD.
ROBERT M. McKEE.

Witnesses:
EUGENE A. WILSON,
RUFUS W. TAYLOR.