US00RE33953E

United States Patent [19]

Everts

[11] E Patent Number: Re. 33,953

[45] Reissued Date of Patent: Jun. 9, 1992

[54] **FILING MODULE**

[76] Inventor: **Kenneth A. Everts**, 15 Willow St., Westwood, Mass. 02090

[21] Appl. No.: **307,759**

[22] Filed: **Feb. 7, 1989**

Related U.S. Patent Documents

Reissue of:

[64] Patent No.: **4,717,215**
Issued: **Jan. 5, 1988**
Appl. No.: **934,175**
Filed: **Nov. 20, 1986**

[51] **Int. Cl.**[5] **A47B 63/00**
[52] **U.S. Cl.** **312/184**; 312/185
[58] **Field of Search** 312/184, 183, 185, 186, 312/187, 188

[56] **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

1,259,659	3/1918	Myers	312/184
3,281,193	10/1966	Murray	312/184
3,363,954	1/1968	Brungardt et al.	312/184
3,753,606	8/1973	Ozeki	312/183
3,788,718	1/1974	Bjorn et al.	312/184
3,971,502	7/1976	Grundell	312/184
4,103,980	8/1978	Silva	312/185
4,234,238	11/1980	Figueroa	312/184
4,325,595	4/1982	Solomon	312/183
4,526,277	7/1985	Snowden et al.	211/46
4,530,176	7/1985	Rejwan	312/184

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

1203730	10/1965	Fed. Rep. of Germany	312/184
1150459	1/1958	France	312/184
1276212	10/1961	France	
2382343	11/1978	France	312/183
2396657	3/1979	France	312/185
619391	3/1949	United Kingdom	
914081	12/1962	United Kingdom	312/184
2123347	2/1984	United Kingdom	312/183

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Brochure Re W. T. Rogers, Folder Rack and Crate-A-File (4 sheets), date unknown.
Pendaflex Catalog A, "Speed Filing Systems" (12 sheets), 1984.
Oxford "McFile" Brochure (2 sheets), date unknown.
Oxford "Decoflex" (2 sheets), date unknown.
Oxford unidentified catalog sheets (5 Sheets), date unknown.
Sentry "Fire-Safe Security File" (2 sheets), 1986.
Unidentified catalog sheets (5 sheets), date unknown.

Primary Examiner—Victor N. Sakran
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A filing module includes a box of relatively rigid material, projections extending outwardly from upper portions of front and rear panels of the box and a pair of parallel rods secured to corresponding projections on the front and rear panels. The parallel rods are spaced to support hanging folders and function as carrying handles. A cover is hinged to the box by one of the rods and can be locked for security. The filing module can be placed in a standard file drawer or can be used independently. In one embodiment, a second pair of parallel rods is secured between end panels of the box to provide support for legal size hanging folders.

30 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets

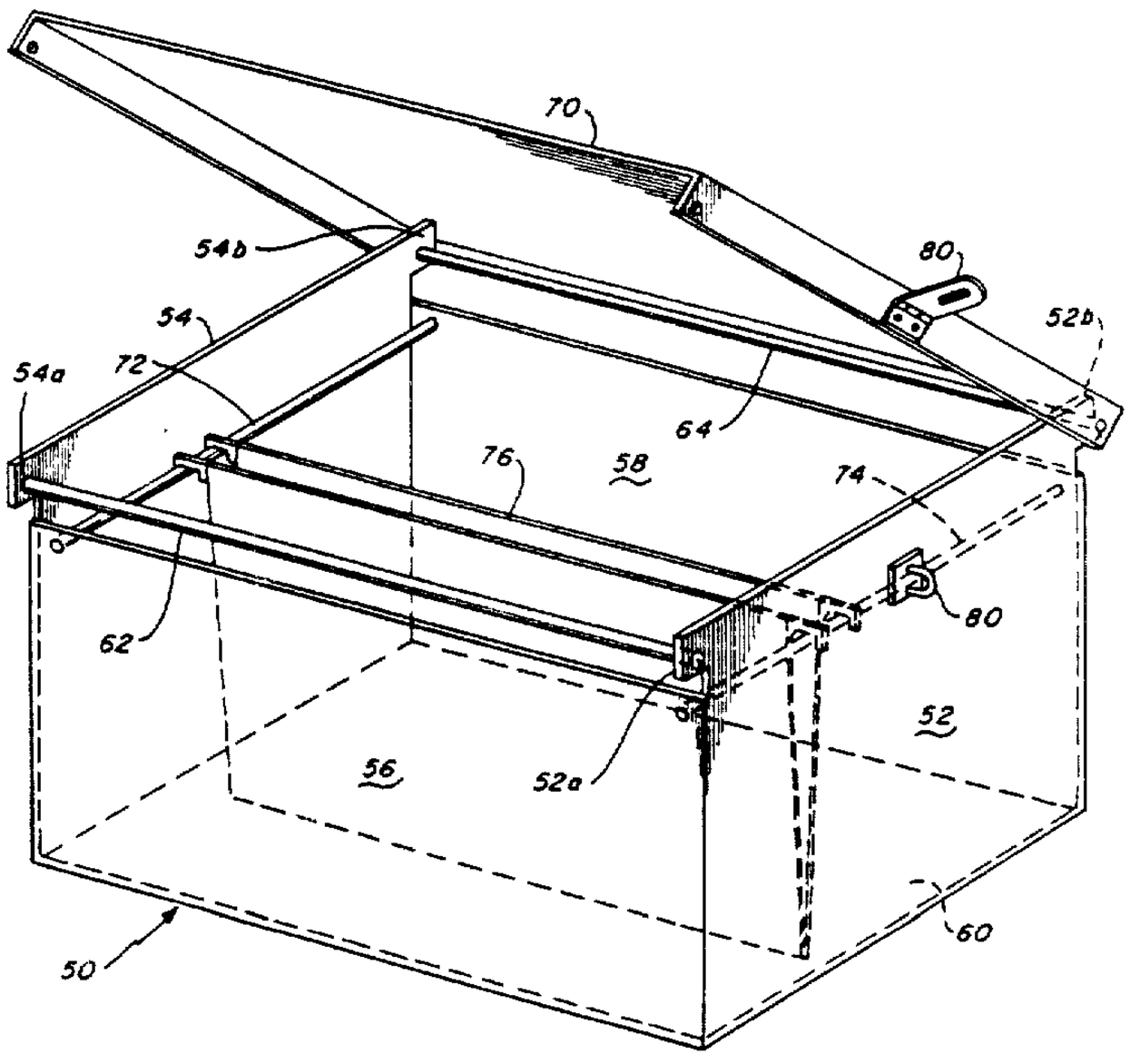


Fig. 1

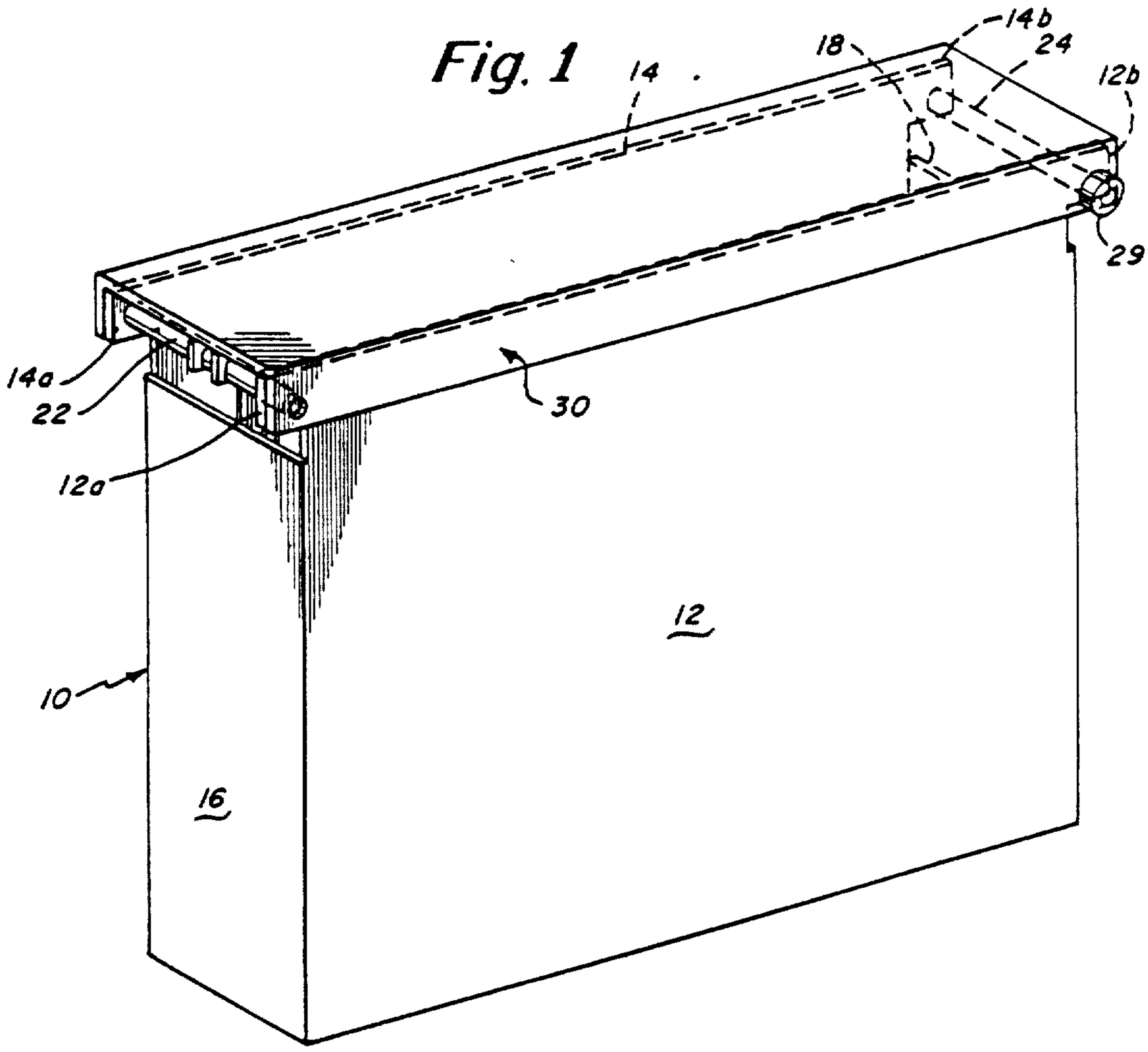

14
18
14b
24
12b
29
14a
22
12a
30
12
10
16

Fig. 2

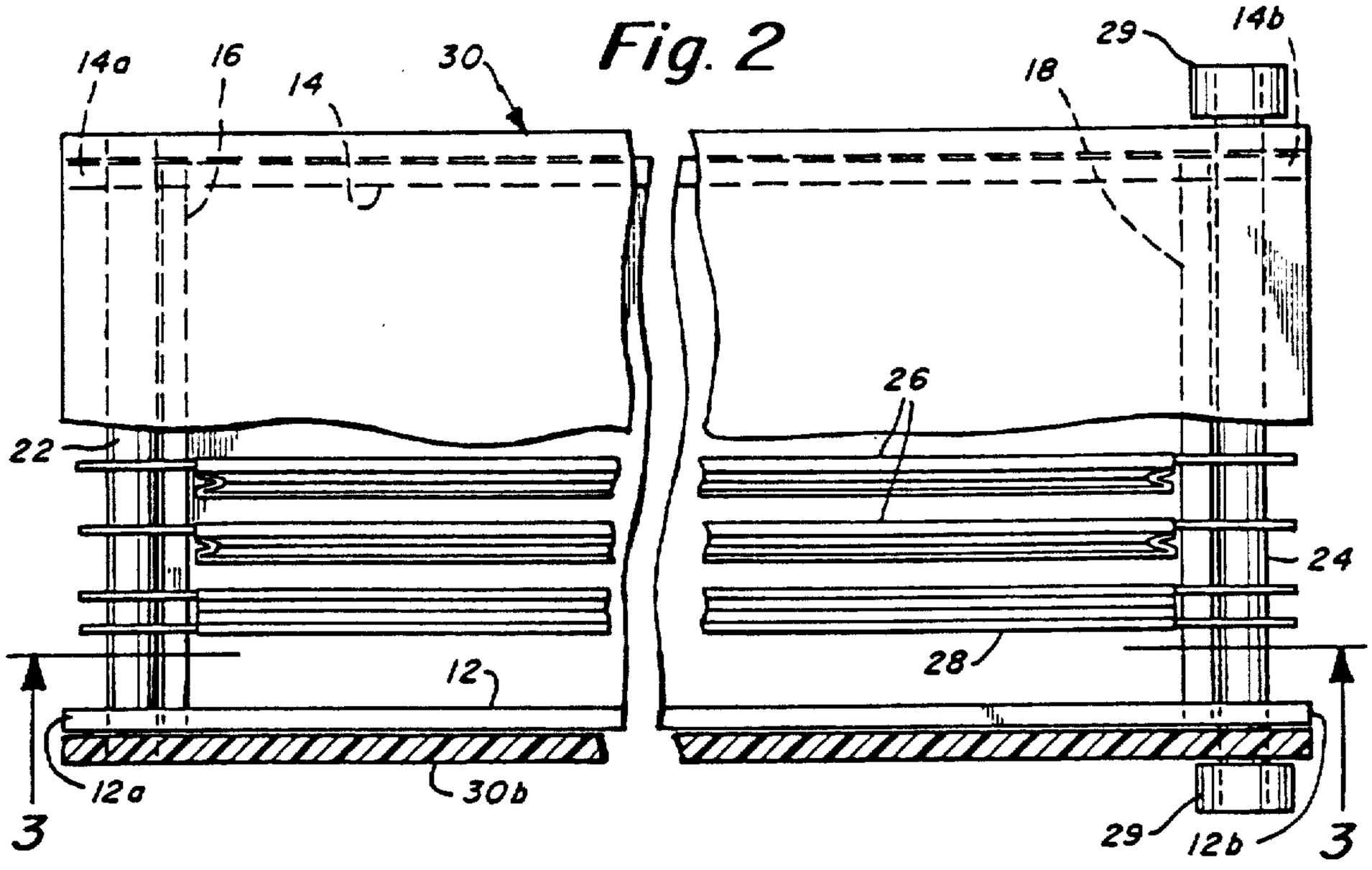

14a
16
14
30
18
29
14b
26
22
24
28
12
12a
30b
29
12b
3
3

Fig. 3

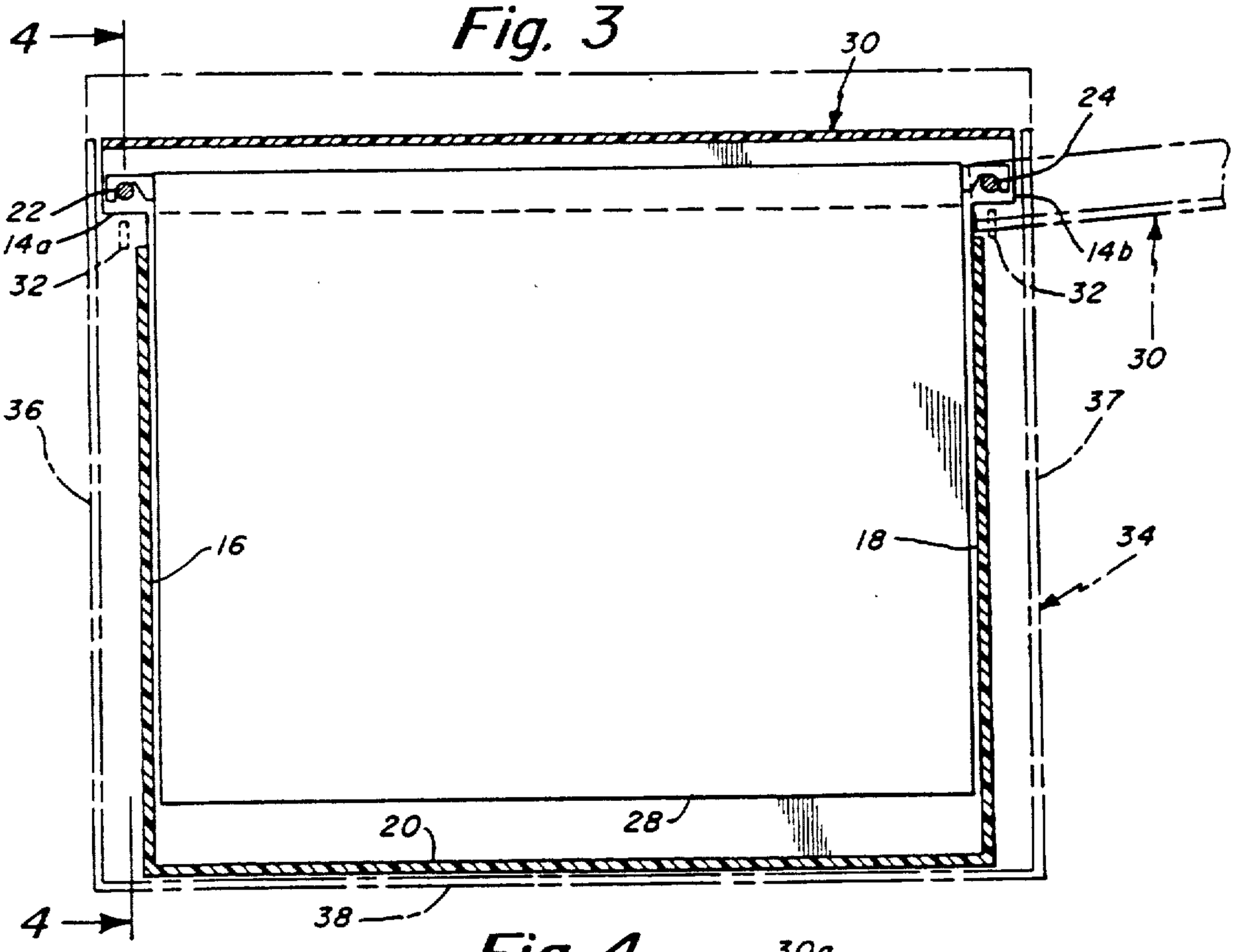

4
30
24
22
14a
32
14b
32
30
36
37
16
18
34
20
28
38
4

Fig. 4

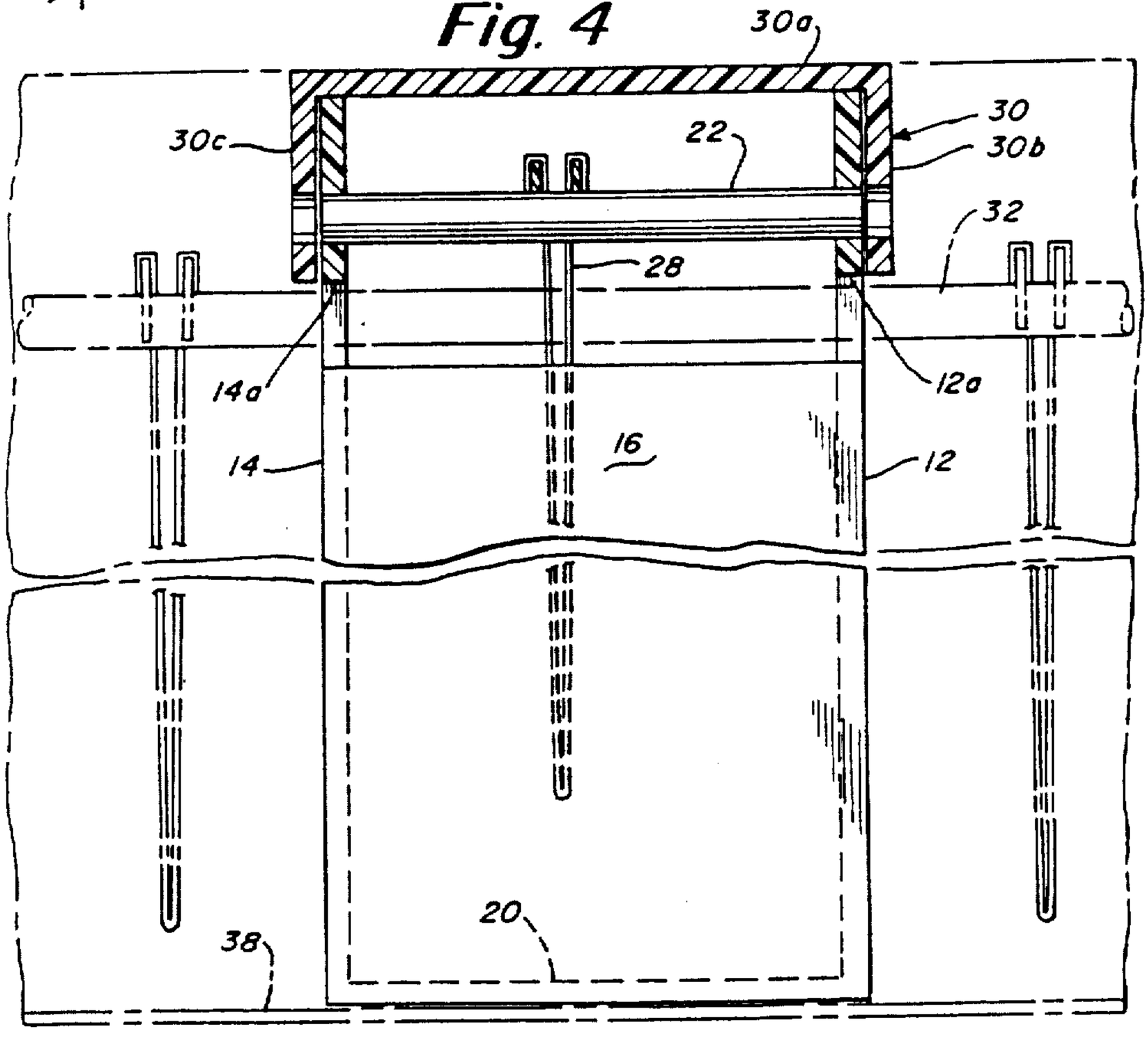

30a
30
30c
22
30b
32
28
14a
12a
14
16
12
38
20

Fig. 5

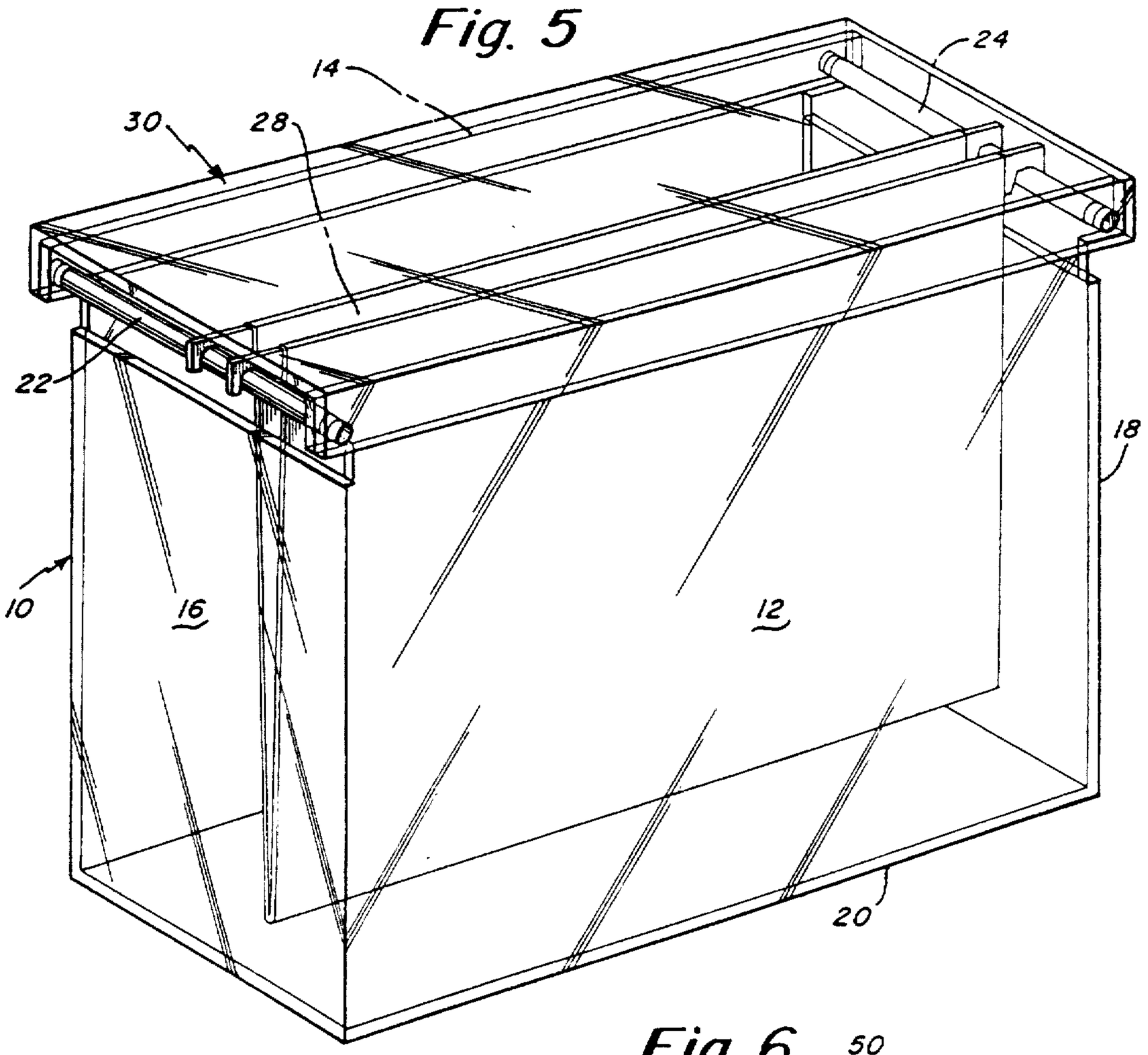

14
24
30
28
22
18
10
16
12
20

Fig. 6

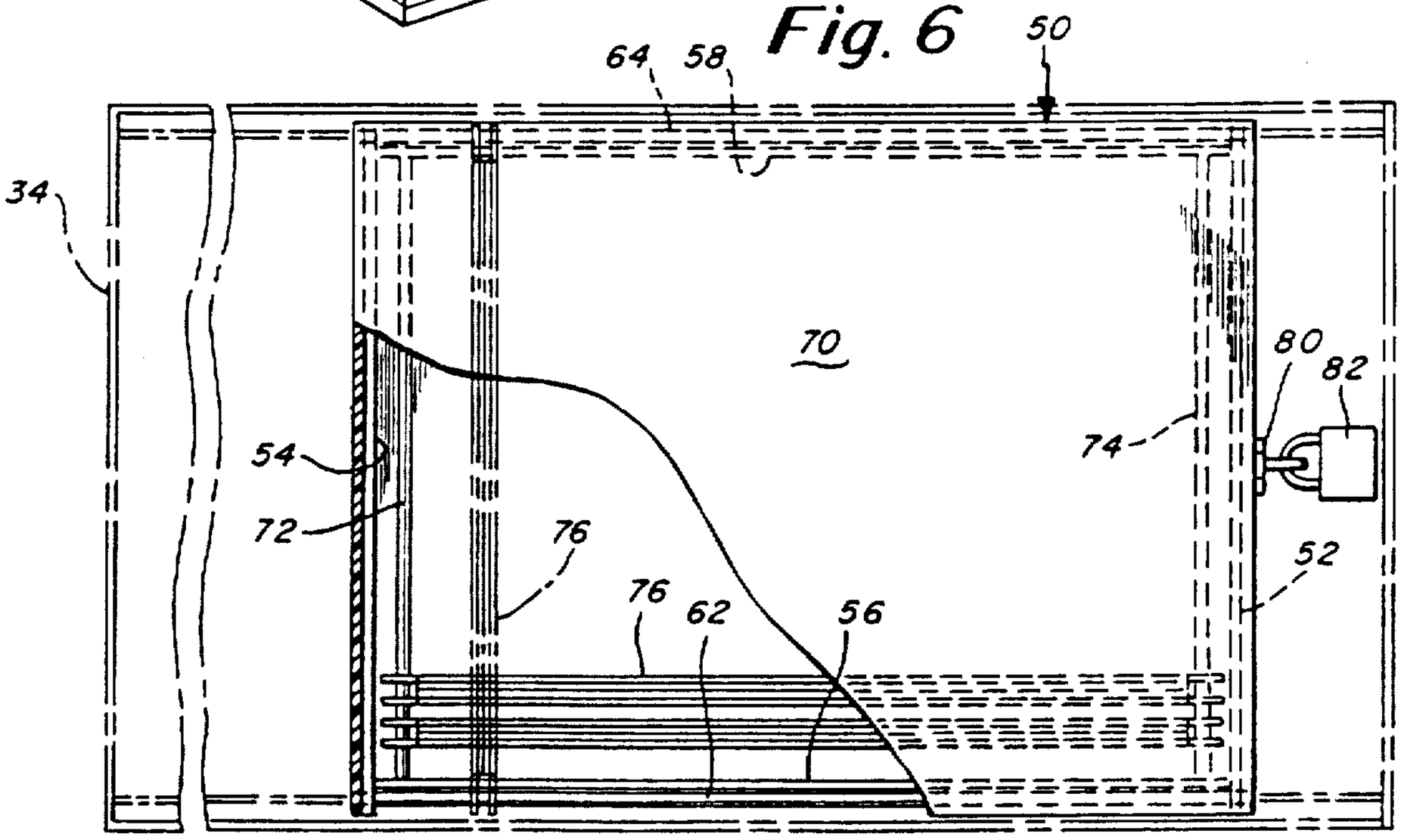
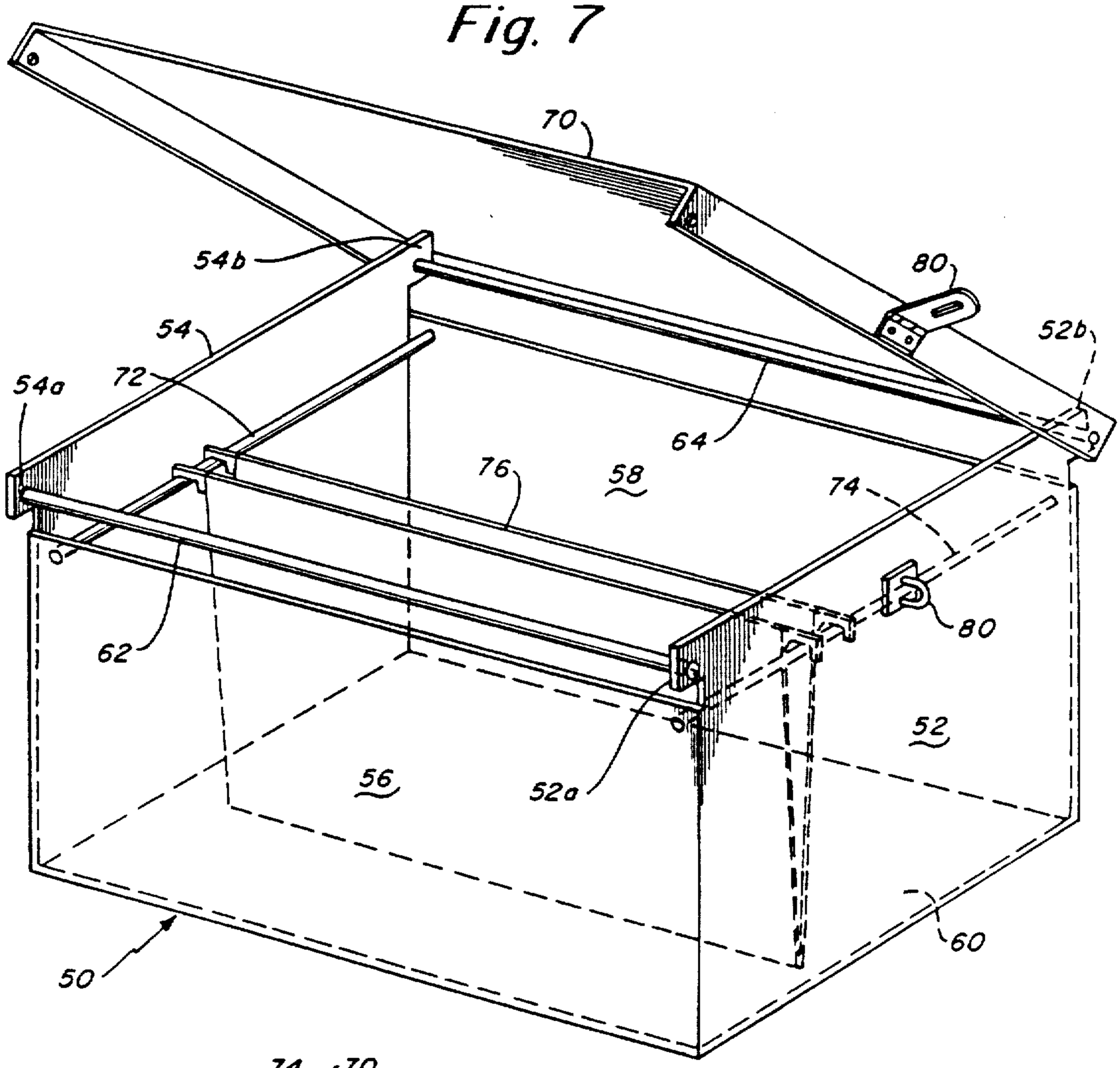

64
58
50
34
70
80
82
74
54
72
76
76
62
56
52

Fig. 7


70
54b
80
54
52b
54a
72
64
76
58
74
62
80
52
56
52a
60
50

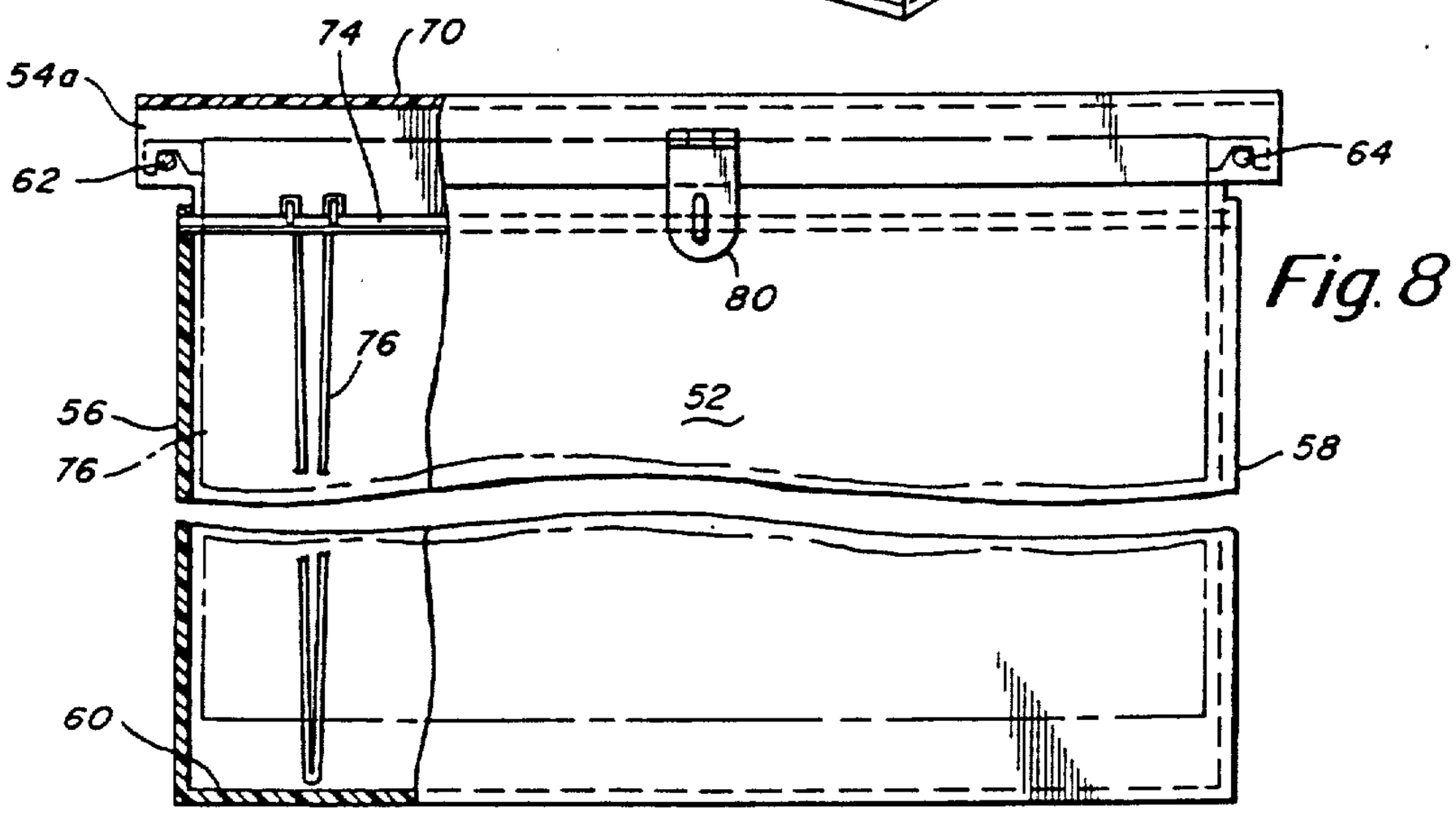
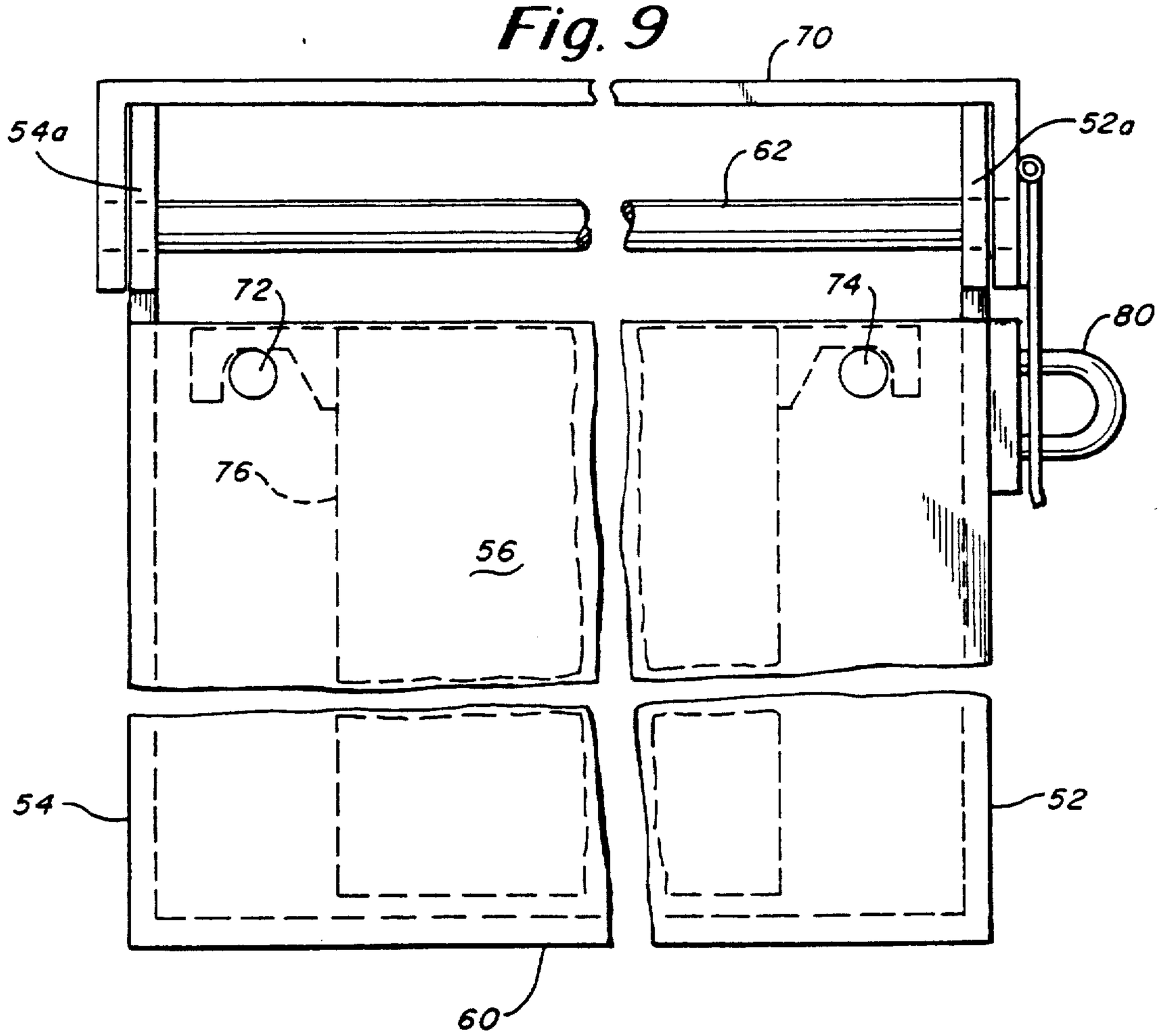

74
70
54a
64
62
80
76
52
56
58
76
60

Fig. 8

Fig. 9



FILING MODULE

Matter enclosed in heavy brackets [ ] appears in the original patent but forms no part of this reissue specification; matter printed in italics indicates the additions made by reissue.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to filing modules and, more particularly, to filing modules for storing hanging files and other objects either in a file drawer or independently, for limiting access to materials stored in the filing modules and for transporting and organizing such materials.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The components of standard suspension or hanging-type filing systems for the record-keeping of paper documents include a file cabinet having drawers of lateral or vertical files, desk drawers, file boxes, open shelves, file folders with open sides to hold paper documents and hanging folders to store the file folders. The hanging folders are suspended by hangers on a rail which is either an integral part of the cabinet structure or part of a separate frame insert. The folders hang above the bottom of the cabinet, allowing them to slide along the rail so as to provide back and forth access and to prevent the file folders contained therein from slumping, sagging or getting lost in the housing. Hanging folders may also be constructed as binders to house computer printouts, special folders to hold thin documents such as microfilm or computer disks, binders for fastening standard paper documents together or as a box bottom to hold bulky materials such as catalogs, magazines and notebook-type binders. The hanging folders usually include provision for tabs and inserts to identify the contents.

A suspension or hanging-type file system does not permit storage and organization of hanging folders as a collective subject grouping which can be retrieved or transferred as an integral unit. For example, a particular project or case may have numerous related file folders. In addition, suspension file systems do not easily accommodate mixing of file folders with nonpaper objects (sample items, criminal evidence and the like). Suspension file systems also do not provide for the security and control of selected folders or groups of folders within the same cabinet, so that access is permitted to some files but not to others. The materials used in the construction of hanging folders do not lend themselves to insuring locked privacy.

Various racks and cases have been used for handling and storage of hanging folders. File boxes having locking covers and carrying handles are known for transporting hanging folders. Such file cases are not adapted for storage in filing cabinets. Therefore, files must be transferred back and forth between the file case and filing cabinets. File racks adapted for temporarily storing hanging folders on desk tops or in file drawers are also known. Such racks do not provide any means for security nor are they well suited for storing items other than hanging folders.

It is a general object of the present invention to provide improved filing modules.

It is another object of the present invention to provide removable filing modules for storing hanging folders and other objects in conventional file drawers having side rails.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide filing modules wherein groups of hanging file folders and other objects can be stored in a file drawer in a secure manner.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide filing modules capable of storing hanging folders of two different sizes.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide filing modules which permit storing of groups of related hanging folders in a file drawer and which permit easy removal and transfer of such groups of files.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to the present invention, these and other objects and advantages are achieved in a filing module comprising a box having a bottom panel, a front panel, a back panel and two end panels, upper portions of the front panel and the back panel extending outwardly beyond each of the end panels to define projections. The filing module further comprises a first pair of parallel rods extending between corresponding projections on the front panel and the back panel and spaced to provide supports for hanging folders of a first specified size, and a cover hinged to the front panel and the rear panel by one of the rods for pivoting movement. The filing module is sized and shaped for placement in a standard file drawer dimensioned for receiving hanging folders of the specified size.

In a preferred embodiment, the projections on the filing module have lower edges sized to rest on conventional side rails for hanging folders in the file drawer. Preferably, the end panels terminate below the lower edges of the projections, thereby permitting the parallel rods to be used for lifting the filing module. The filing module can be provided with means for locking the cover.

According to another aspect of the invention, the filing module further includes a second pair of parallel rods extending between the end panels and spaced apart to provide supports for hanging folders of a second specified size. This configuration can store either standard size hanging folders or legal size hanging folders.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the present invention, together with other and further objects, advantages and capabilities thereof, reference is made to the accompanying drawings which are incorporated herein by reference and in which:

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of a small filing module in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. **2** is a top plan view of the filing module of FIG. **1**, partially broken away to show storage of file folders;

FIG. **3** is a cross-sectional view of the filing module taken through the line **3—3** of FIG. **2**, with the cover shown in phantom in an open position;

FIG. **4** is a cross-sectional view of the filing module taken through the line **4—4** of FIG. **3** with a portion of a file drawer shown in phantom;

FIG. **5** is a perspective view of an intermediate size filing module in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. **6** is a top plan view, partially cutaway, of a legal size filing module in a filing drawer;

FIG. **7** is a perspective view of a legal size filing module in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. **8** is a front view, partially cut away, of the legal size filing module of FIG. 7; and

FIG. **9** is a side view of the legal size filing module shown in FIG. 7.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A filing module in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIGS. **1–4**. A rectangular box **10** is defined by a front panel **12**, a back panel **14**, end panels **16**, **18** joining from panel **12** and back panel **14**, and a bottom panel **20**. The filing module also includes rods **22**, **24** for retaining hanging folders **26**, **28** within the box **10** and a hinged cover **30**. The filing module will now be described in detail.

The panels **12**, **14**, **16**, **18**, **20** can be formed of any relatively rigid material, such as plastic, cardboard or the like and may be opaque or transparent. Individual panels joined at their edges by an adhesive may be used, or an integrally formed box **10** may be utilized. The relatively rigid material of the box **10** provides security when the module is locked, protects the files against damage, and permits storage of non-paper objects.

Front panel **12** includes projections **12a**, **12b** extending outwardly from the upper portion thereof beyond end panels **16**, **18**, respectively. The back panel **14** is provided with projections **14a**, **14b** extending outwardly from the upper portion thereof beyond end panels **16**, **18**, respectively. The projections **12a**, **12b**, **14a**, **14b** are preferably rectangular and are dimensioned and shaped to rest on conventional hanging file rails **32**, as shown in FIG. **3**, when the filing module is placed in a filing drawer **34**.

The projections **12a** and **14a**, adjacent end panel **16**, have aligned holes in which rod **22** is secured. Similarly, projections **12b** and **14b**, adjacent end panel **18**, have aligned holes in which rod **24** is secured. The rods **22**, **24** are parallel and are spaced to accommodate hanging folders **26**, **28** of a specified size such as standard size or legal size. The rods **22**, **24** are secured permanently in the respective projections **12a**, **12b**, **14a**, **14b** by adhesive or any other suitable means. In the example of FIGS. **1–4**, the rod **24** is secured by retaining knobs **29** at each end thereof. As seen in FIG. **4**, the ends of rod **22** are flush with the front panel **12** and the rear panel **14** to permit the cover **30** to be closed.

The cover **30** includes a generally flat top portion **30a** and downwardly extending flanges **30b**, **30c** along the front and rear edges, respectively, of top portion **30a** to form an inverted channel. One of the rods **22** or **24** has a length greater than the width of the box **10** so that the ends thereof pass through aligned holes in the cover **30**. Thus, the cover **30** can pivot about the rod to which it is attached. In the example of FIG. **3**, cover **30** is pivoted about rod **24** and is shown in phantom in the open position.

The rods **22**, **24** mounted in the outwardly extending projections **12a**, **12b**, **14a**, **14b** are conveniently used as carrying handles for the filing module. To facilitate use of the rods **22**, **24** as carrying handles, the end panels **16**, **18** are terminated below the lower edges of the projections **12a**, **12b**, **14a**, **14b**. The cut out portions insure easy access by the hand of a person carrying the filing modules.

The filing module is shown in file drawer **34** in FIGS. **3** and **4**. The file drawer **34** is of standard design with sides **36**, **37**, bottom **38**, front and rear (not shown) and rails **32**, and can be located in a front opening file cabinet or a side opening file cabinet. The rails **32** are used in a standard file drawer to support handling folders. The filing module of the present invention is sized and shaped to fit within the file drawer, as clearly seen in FIGS. **3** and **4**, with the projections **12a**, **12b**, **14a**, **14b** resting on the rails **32**. Alternatively, in file drawers not having rails, the filing module can rest on the bottom **38** of the file drawer. The dimension of the filing module in the direction of rods **22**, **24** is usually much less than the depth of the file drawer **34**. However, in the case of a legal size filing module, as shown in FIG. **6** and described hereinafter, the filing module can occupy a substantial proportion of the file drawer.

FIG. **5** illustates an embodiment of the present invention having larger dimensions than the embodiment of FIGS. **1–4** and made of a transparent material to permit viewing of the files or other materials contained in the filing module. Elements designated by the same reference numerals used in FIGS. **1–4** have the same general construction as described hereinabove, except these elements may have different dimensions.

A filing module in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIGS. **6–9**. In this embodiment, the filing module is elongated to permit storage of hanging folders of two different sizes at different times. The filing module includes a box **50** defined by a front panel **52**, a back panel **54**, end-panels **56**, **58** and a bottom panel **60**. A rod **62** extends between a projection **52a** in front panel **52** and a projection **54a** in back panel **54**. A rod **64** extends between a projection **52b** in front panel **52** and a projection **54b** in back panel **54**. A cover **0**, having a generally flat top portion and downwardly extending flanges along its front and rear edges, is hinged to the box **50** so as to pivot about rod **64**. The filing module is further provided with a second pair of parallel rods **72**, **74** extending between the end panels **56**, **58** and spaced apart to provide supports for hanging folders **76** of a different size than can be supported by rods **62**, **64**. Typically, the rods **72**, **74** are spaced for legal size folders while the rods **62**, **64** are spaced for standard size folders. However, it will be understood that each pair of rods can be spaced to accommodate any desired size hanging folder. Although the filing module shown in FIGS. **6–9** can accommodate two different size folders, it can accommodate only one size folder at a time, since the two different sizes are stored in perpendicular directions.

The embodiment of FIGS. **6–9** is provided with means for locking the cover in the form of a gasp **80** and padlock **82**. The filing module can be placed in a filing drawer, as best seen in FIG. **6**, with the projections **52a**, **52b**, **54a**, **54b** resting on the rails of the file drawer. Conventional files are stored parallel to the drawer front. Legal size files are stored perpendicular to the drawer front.

The filing modules shown and described hereinabove eliminate many of the problems of existing hanging folder systems and have a number of advantages in the operation of a filing system. The filing module of the present invention functions as a housing for hanging folders within a file cabinet and provides different sizes for diverse grouping of materials. Because of the modular construction, the filing module can be utilized either as an integral storage device by itself or can be stored within the file cabinet. In addition, the filing module can be used as a portable work station such as on a desk where the contents are active and require frequent transfer. The filing module permits the use of rigid

materials and a lock for security. The filing module provides the capacity to file objects other than paper documents. Bar code labels are easily installed on the cover or side panels of the filing module. The file modules can be placed in a normal filing sequence without disrupting other hanging folders in the same drawer and can be interspersed with hanging folders. Also, the filing module can, if desired, be used in a standard file drawer without rails adapted for hanging folders. The large size filing module permits the use of legal size hanging folders within a standard size drawer. The locking option permits security of groups of files within a file drawer, while allowing nonauthorized personnel to have access to other files within the same drawer. The handle arrangements permit quick and easy carrying of the filing module. The files pertaining to a particular subject are held together as a group in the filing module.

While there has been shown and described what is at present considered the preferred embodiments of the present invention, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications may be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A filing module comprising:

a box having a bottom panel, a front panel, a back panel and two end panels, upper portions of said front panel and said back panel extending outwardly beyond each of said end panels to define projections;

a first pair of parallel rods extending between corresponding projections on said front panel and said back panel and spaced to provide supports for hanging folders of a first specified size, said projections having lower edges for resting on rails spaced for receiving hanging folders of said first specified range; and

a cover hinged to said front panel and said rear panel by one of said rods for pivoting movement,

said filing module being sized and shaped for a placement in a file drawer dimensioned for receiving hanging folders of said specified size.

2. A filing module as defined in claim **1** wherein said cover includes a generally flat top and downwardly extending flanges along its front and rear edges, said one of said rods passing through holes in said flanges.

3. A filing module as defined in claim **1** wherein said end panels terminate below the lower edges of said projections thereby permitting said rods to be used for lifting said filing module.

4. A filing module as defined in claim **1** further including means for locking said cover to said box.

5. A filing module as defined in claim **1** further including a second pair of parallel rods, extending between said end panels and spaced apart to provide supports for hanging folders of a second specified size.

6. A filing module as defined in claim **6** wherein said first specified size is standard size and said second specified size is legal size.

7. A filing system comprising:

a filing cabinet;

at least one file drawer located in said filing cabinet and having parallel rails spaced for receiving hanging folders of a first specified size; and

a filing module comprising

a box having a bottom panel, a front panel, a back panel and two end panels, upper portions of said front panel and said back panel extending outwardly beyond each of said end panels to define projections;

a first pair of parallel rods extending between corresponding projections on said front panel and said back panel and spaced to provide supports for hanging folders of said first specified size, said projections having lower edges for resting on said rails; and

a cover hinged to said front panel and said rear panel by one of said rods for pivoting movement,

said filing module being sized and shaped for placement in said file drawer.

8. A filing system as defined in claim **7** wherein said cover includes a generally flat top and downwardly extending flanges along its front and rear edges, said one of said rods passing through holes in said flanges.

9. A filing system as defined in claim **7** wherein said end panels terminate below the lower edges of said projections thereby permitting said rods to be used for lifting said filing module.

10. A filing system as defined in claim **7** further including means for locking said cover to said box.

11. A filing system as defined in claim **7** further including a second pair of parallel rods, extending between said end panels and spaced apart to provide supports for hanging folders of a second specified size.

12. A filing system as defined in claim **11** wherein said first specified size is standard size and said second specified size is legal size.

13. A filing module comprising:

a box having a bottom panel, a front panel, a back panel and two end panels, upper portions of said front panel and said back panel extending outwardly beyond each of said end panels to define projections; and

first means, coupled to said box, for supporting hanging folders of a first specified size, said projections having lower edges for resting on rails spaced for receiving hanging folders of said first specified size, said filing module being sized and shaped for placement in a file drawer dimensioned for receiving hanging folders of said specified size.

14. A filing module as defined in claim 13 further comprising a cover hinged to said front panel and said rear panel for pivoting movement.

15. A filing module as defined in claim 14 wherein said cover includes a generally flat top and downwardly extending flanges along its front and rear edges.

16. A filing module as defined in claim 13 wherein said end panels terminate below the lower edges of said projections thereby permitting said first means for supporting to be used for lifting said filing module.

17. A filing module as defined in claim 14 further including means for locking said cover to said box.

18. A filing module as defined in claim 13 further including a second support means, extending between said end panels and spaced to provide supports for hanging folders of a second specified size.

19. A filing module as defined in claim 18 wherein said first specified size is standard size and said second specified size is legal size.

20. A filing system comprising:

a filing cabinet;

at least one file drawer located in said filing cabinet and dimensioned for receiving hanging folders of a first specified size; and

a filing module comprising

a box having a bottom panel, a front panel, a back panel and two end panels, upper portions of said front panel and said back panel extending outwardly beyond each of said end panels to define projections;

first means, coupled to said box, for supporting for hanging folders of a first specified size, said projections having lower edges for resting on rails spaced for receiving hanging folders of said first specified size, said filing module being sized and shaped for placement in said file drawer.

21. A filing system as defined in claim 20 wherein said filing module further comprises a cover hinged to said front panel and said rear panel for pivoting movement.

22. A filing system as defined in claim 21 wherein said cover includes a generally flat top and downwardly extending flanges along its front and rear edges.

23. A filing system as defined in claim 20 wherein said end panels terminate below the lower edges of said projections thereby permitting said means for supporting to be used for lifting said filing module.

24. A filing system as defined in claim 22 further including means for locking said cover to said box.

25. A filing system as defined in claim 20 further including a second support means, extending between said end panels to provide supports for hanging folders of a second specified size.

26. A filing system as defined in claim 25 wherein said first specified size is standard size and said second specified size is legal size.

27. A filing module comprising:

a box having a bottom panel, a front panel, a back panel and two end panels, upper portions of said front panel and said back panel extending outwardly beyond each of said end panels to define projections;

a first pair of parallel rods extending between corresponding projections on said front panel and said back panel and spaced to provide supports for hanging folders of a first specified size, said projections having lower edges for resting on rails spaced for receiving hanging folders of said first specified size;

said filing module being size and shaped for placement in a file drawer dimensioned for receiving hanging folders of said first specified size.

28. A filing system comprising:

a filing cabinet;

at least one file drawer located in said filing cabinet and having parallel rails dimensioned for receiving hanging folders of a first specified size; and

a filing module comprising:

a box having a bottom panel, a front panel, a back panel and two end panels, upper portions of said front panel and said back panel extending outwardly beyond each of said end panels to define projections;

a first pair of parallel rods extending between corresponding projections on said front panel and said back panel and spaced to provide supports for hanging folders of said first specified size, said projections having lower edges for resting on said rails; and

said filing module being sized and shaped for placement in said file drawer.

29. A filing module comprising:

a box having a bottom panel, a front panel, a back panel and two end panels, upper portions of said front panel and said back panel extending outwardly beyond each of said end panels to define projections;

a pair of parallel support means extending between corresponding projections on said front panel and said back panel and spaced to provide supports for hanging files of a first specified size, said projections having lower edges for resting on rails spaced for receiving hanging folders of said first specified size; and

said filing module being sized and shaped for placement in a file drawer dimensioned for receiving hanging folders of said specified size.

30. A filing system comprising;

a filing cabinet;

at least one file drawer located in said filing cabinet and having parallel rails spaced for receiving hanging folders of the first specified size; and

a filing module comprising;

a box having a bottom panel, a front panel, a back panel and two end panels, upper portions of said front panel and said back panel extending outwardly beyond each of said end panels to define projections;

a pair of parallel support means extending between corresponding projections on said front and said back panels and spaced to provide supports for hanging folders of the first specified size, said projections having lower edges for resting on said rails; and

said filing module being sized and shaped for placement in said file drawer.

* * * * *