

[54] **METHOD FOR MAKING PERSONALIZED LETTER PACKAGES**

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Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation of Ser. No. 71,673, Sept. 14, 1970, abandoned.

[52] U.S. Cl. **93/73, 93/61 A, 101/93 C, 229/73, 282/11.5 A, 282/25**

[51] Int. Cl. **B31b 1/88, B31b 1/90**

[58] **Field of Search** 101/426, 93 C; 197/133 P, 197/133 R, 130, 135; 282/11.5 A, 11.5 R, 12, 19, 25; 281/5, 2; 229/73, 69; 93/1.1, 73, 61 R

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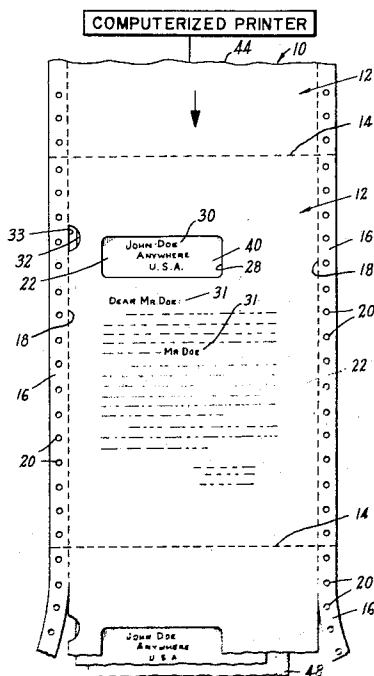
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ABSTRACT

[57]

A method for making an assembly of series-connected personalized letter packages from a plurality of continuously advancing webs of sheet material. Each package comprises a personalized letter piece having a patch pocket containing a personalized return item and including a window associated with the pocket and through which a portion of the return item is exposed. The address of a recipient, imprinted on the exposed portion of the return item by a high-speed computer-printer, also serves as the inside address for a letter imprinted on the letter piece. The computer-printer also imprints the name of the recipient in the salutation and in the body of the letter.

8 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures



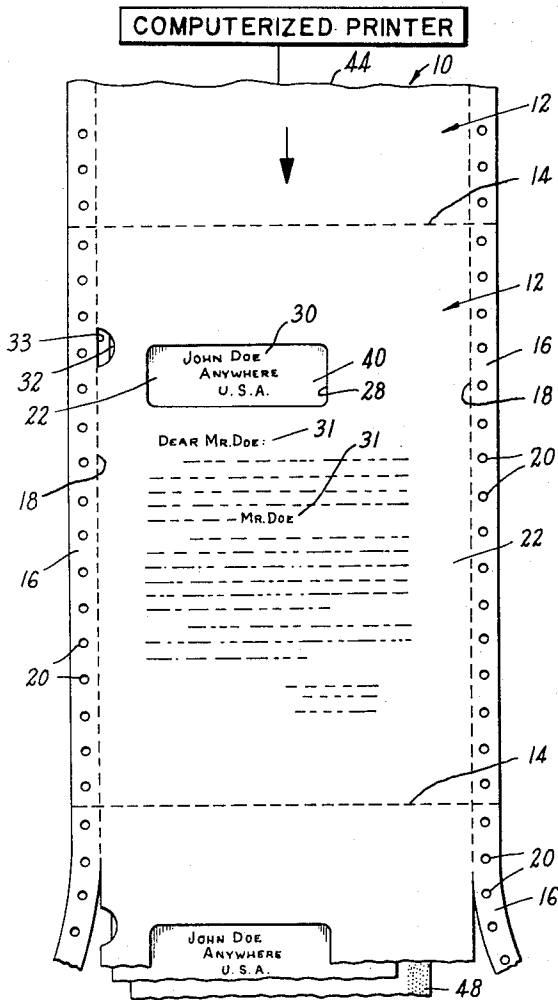


FIG. 1

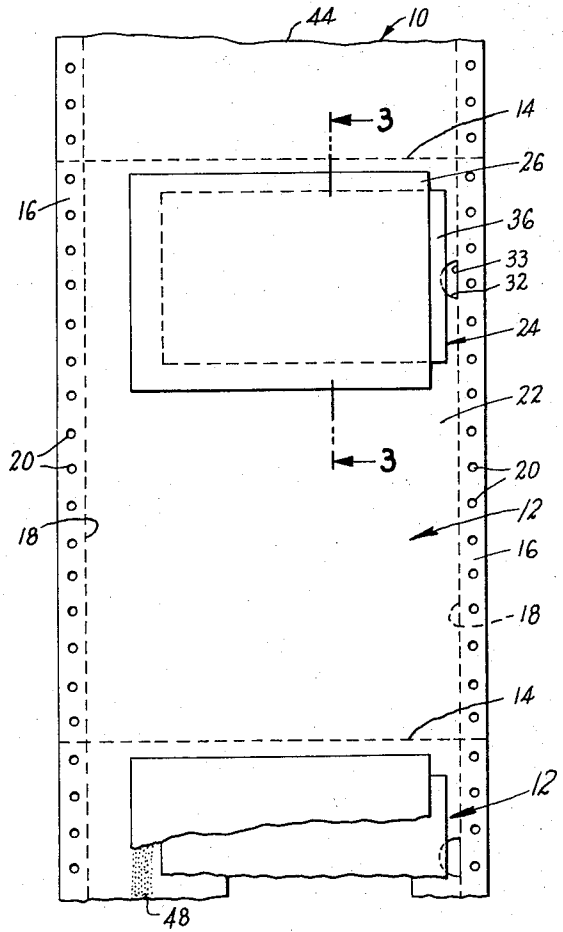


FIG. 2

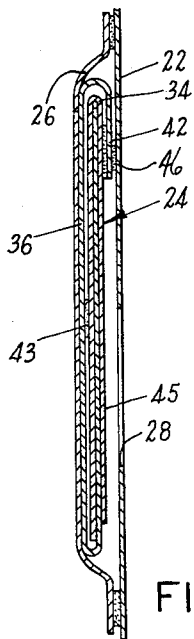


FIG. 3

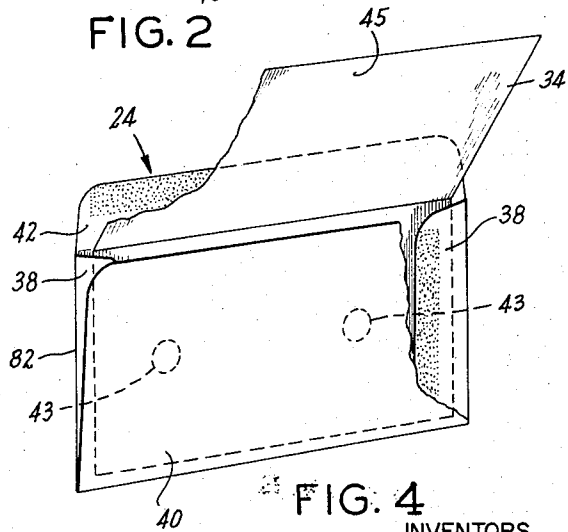


FIG. 4

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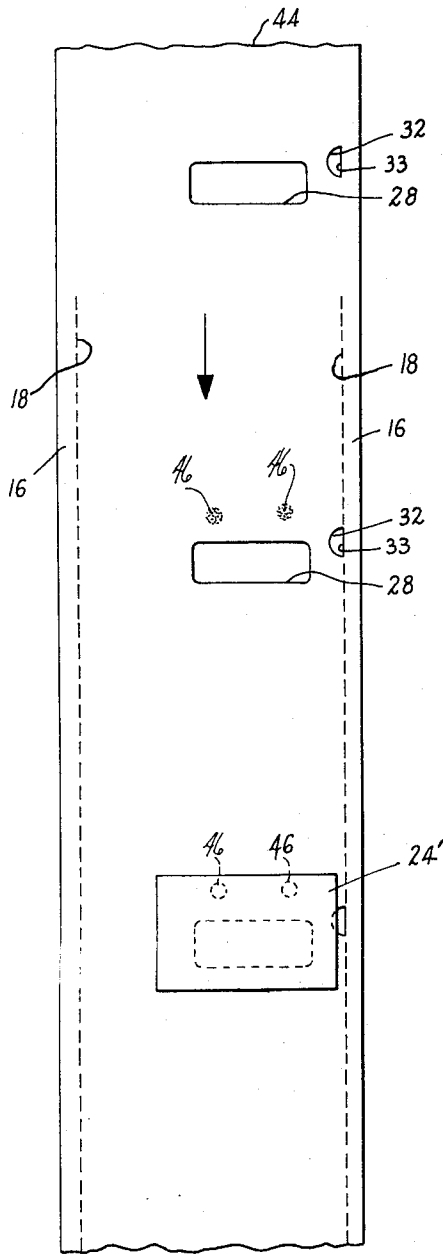


FIG. 5

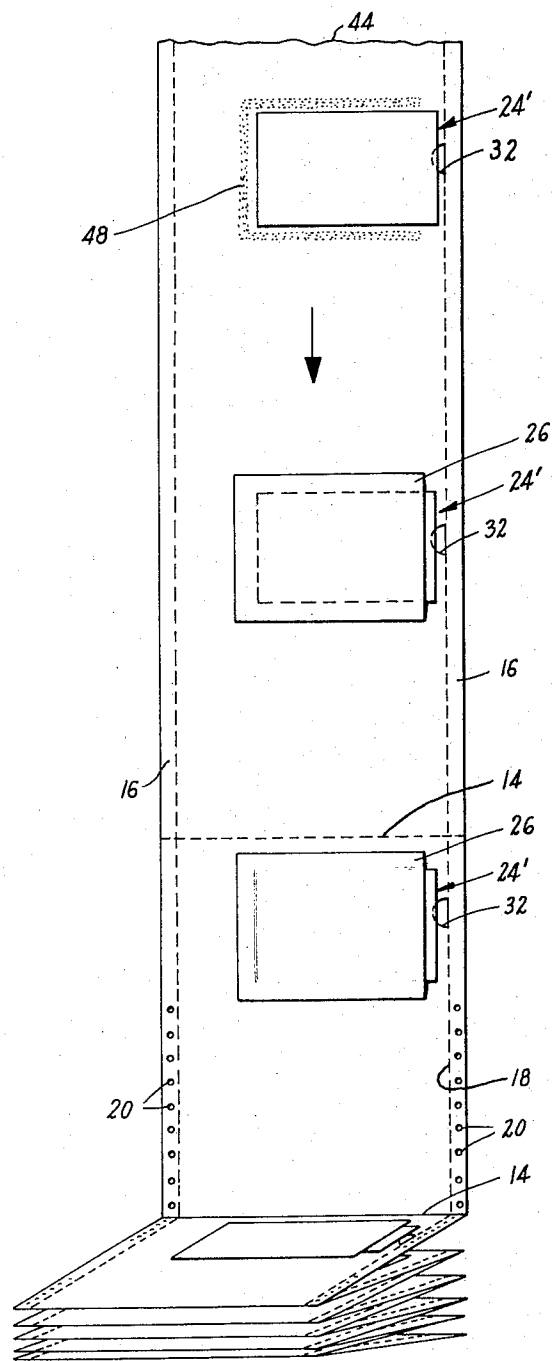


FIG. 6

METHOD FOR MAKING PERSONALIZED LETTER PACKAGES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a continuation of prior application Ser. No. 71,673, filed Sept. 14, 1970, now abandoned.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates in general to personalized mailing packages and deals more particularly with an improved method for making a personalized computer letter package which includes a letter piece and a collated personalized return item.

Knowledgeable users of directed mail packages regard personalization as a highly desirable feature. Letters of the type used in direct mail advertising, fund-raising solicitation, and the like are usually personalized by imprinting the name of a recipient in one or more positions in the body of a letter using a high-speed computer-printer or the like. When a return item or reply insert comprises a part of the package to facilitate orders, inquiries, acknowledgements or return transmittal of other information, it is generally desirable that the name of the recipient also be imprinted on the return item to assure proper identification of the item when returned to the sender. Customarily, such return items are separately imprinted for subsequent hand-collation with corresponding letter pieces. Errors in collation may and often do occur when the return items are assembled with the letters to complete the mailing packages. Accordingly, it is the general aim of the present invention to provide an improved method for making a personalized letter package wherein problems of collation are eliminated to guarantee proper matching of personalized parts which comprise the letter package.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the present invention, an improved method is provided for making a personalized letter package which includes a letter piece and a return item carried by the letter piece. The package is formed to permit the name of a recipient to be imprinted in one or more positions on the body of the letter piece and on its associated return item in a single computerized printing operation.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a front view of a personalized continuous form computer letter package assembly made in accordance with the method of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary rear view of the package assembly of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along the line 3-3 of FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a somewhat enlarged rear perspective view of a return item which comprises a part of a letter package of FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary rear view of a web of sheet material used in making the letter package assembly of FIG. 1 and shows, from top to bottom, successive changes in the material as letter packages are formed therefrom.

FIG. 6 is a continuation of the web of FIG. 5 and shows, from top to bottom, further successive changes in the web as letter packages are formed therefrom.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED METHOD

Turning now to the drawings and referring first particularly to FIGS. 1 and 2, a typical assembly of continuous form or series connected letter packages made in accordance with the present invention and indicated generally at 10 comprises a series of individual letter packages 12, 12 connected together in end-to-end relation along lines of perforation or weakening 14, 14. The assembly 10 also includes longitudinally extending marginal carrier strips 16, 16 separated from the letter packages by lines of weakening 18, 18. The assembly 10 is adapted to be conveyed through an automatic computer-printer or the like and for this reason a longitudinal series of configurations or feed holes 20, 20 are formed in each of the carrier strips 16, 16 for cooperating with a feed device such as a pin-wheel feed mechanism associated with the computer-printer.

Each letter package 12 includes a letter piece 22 and a return item or reply insert 24. The insert is contained in a patch pocket formed on the letter piece by a patch 26 attached to the rear surface of the letter piece as shown in FIG. 2. A portion of the insert surface is exposed in a window 28 cut in the letter piece and has the name of a recipient imprinted thereon.

In the illustrated case, both the name and the address of a recipient is imprinted on the exposed surface portion of each reply insert 24 as indicated at 30 and serves as the inside address for an associated letter piece 22. The name of the recipient is also imprinted in at least one position on the front surface of the letter piece. However, in the illustrated embodiment 10 the name of the recipient indicated at 31 appears both in the salutation and in the body of a letter imprinted on the letter piece 22. Preferably, and as shown, each letter piece is provided with a thumb cut-out opening 32 to facilitate grasping the insert 24 to separate it from its associated letter piece 22. As shown, each cut-out opening 32 has a generally semicircular configuration and includes a straight edge 33 which coincides with an associated line of weakening 18.

The insert used in practicing the invention may be made in various forms and may, for example, comprise the simple reply card, but preferably, each insert 24 comprises an envelope 82 which contains a coupon 34, as best shown in FIG. 4. The envelope 82 is formed from a unitary blank and includes a front panel 36, side panels 38, 38, a rear panel 40 and a closing flap 42. The coupon 34 is preferably retained in the envelope 82 by one or more spots of release type adhesive, such as indicated at 43, which permit the coupon to be readily removed from the envelope without damaging either the coupon or the envelope. The adhesive 43 serves primarily to retain the coupon in proper position on the envelope blank during envelope assembly. In FIG. 4, the reply insert 24 is shown with the envelope flap 42 in an open position. It should be noted that the coupon 34 has a portion 45 which extends from the envelope 82. When the reply insert 24 is assembled with an associated letter piece 22, the coupon portion 45 is folded into overlying relation with an associated portion of the envelope back panel 40 and the closing flap 42 is folded to closed position and partially overlies the cou-

pon portion 45. The name and address of a recipient is imprinted on the coupon portion 45 which is exposed in the window 28. Preferably, the return address of the sender is imprinted on the envelope front panel 36.

A method for making an assembly of series-connected personalized letter packages 10, 10 from an advancing web of sheet material or paper 44 is illustrated in FIGS. 5 and 6. The illustrated method is particularly adapted to be practiced with a conventional high-speed envelope making machine or the like, of a type capable of continuously advancing a plurality of webs of sheet material at high speed through a plurality of work stations where a variety of operations are simultaneously performed thereon, as for example, scoring, folding, gumming and imprinting messages or designs. Since the invention is practiced with conventional apparatus well known in the envelope art, for clarity of illustration the apparatus is not shown. The sequence of operations may vary and will, of course, depend upon the relative arrangement of the various work stations and the order in which these stations are encountered by the advancing webs. A preferred sequence of operation is illustrated and will be evident from consideration of the web 44 as viewed from top to bottom in FIGS. 5, 6 and 1 or in the direction of web advance indicated by the directional arrow thereon. The computer-printer for imprinting the names of various recipients on the packages 12, 12 may form part of the apparatus for making the packages or, if desired, may comprise an auxiliary apparatus through which the series connected assembly 10 is fed.

In accordance with the presently preferred method for practicing the invention, a portion of the salutation and the body of each letter is imprinted on the advancing web 44. Appropriate space is provided in the preprinted salutation and body of each letter to accommodate the name of a recipient, which is filled in by the computer-printer in a subsequent printing operation.

Referring now to FIG. 5, the window openings 28, 28 are successively die cut in the advancing web 44. The thumb cut-out openings are also preferably simultaneously formed by the same die cutting operation. Each window opening 28 and an associated surrounding portion of the web 44 generally defines a blank from which a letter piece 22 is formed. In accordance with a preferred method for practicing the invention, at least one line of weakening 18 is formed on an associated marginal edge of the web 44 to define a carrier strip 16. The number of carrier strips provided will be determined by the feed mechanism associated with the computer-printer. In the illustrated case, two lines of weakening 18, 18 are formed on the web 44 to define two carrier strips 16, 16. The line of weakening 18 near the right edge of the web 44, as it appears in FIG. 5, is longitudinally aligned with the straight edge 33 to coincide therewith.

The return inserts may be formed from one or more webs of sheet material (not shown) which simultaneously advance with the web 44 or may be made on an auxiliary apparatus and joined with the web 44 by a tipping-on or inserting mechanism associated with the apparatus for advancing and operating on the web 44.

Each insert 24' may comprise a simple rectangular reply card or an envelope structure, such as aforescribed, and is applied to the rear surface of the advancing web 44 to cover an associated window opening 28.

More specifically, each insert 24' is applied to the web 44 overlying an associated window opening 28 so that a portion of the insert is exposed in the window opening. Preferably, and as shown, one or more spots of a release type adhesive such as indicated at 46, 46 are applied to the rear surface of the web 44 near each window opening 28 before an insert 24' is applied thereto to temporarily secure the insert to the web at least during assembly. The spots of adhesive 46, 46 are preferably applied to the web 44 above each window opening 28 to adhesively engage the insert. The latter adhesive is preferably a release type adhesive which, when moist, tends to adhere the insert to the web, but which after drying or aging permits the insert to be pulled free of the web without substantial damage to either the insert or the web.

A longitudinal series of generally U-shaped lines of adhesive 48, 48 are applied to the rear surface of the advancing web. Each U-shaped line of adhesive 48 partially surrounds an associated one of the inserts 24', 24' and opens in the direction of an associated thumb cut-out 32. A patch 26 cut from another simultaneously advancing web of sheet material is applied to cover each U-shaped line of adhesive 48 and an associated portion of an insert 24'. Each patch cooperates with an associated rear surface portion of the web 44 to form a pocket which contains an associated insert 24'.

A longitudinal series of lines of weakening or separation 14, 14 are formed on the advancing web 44 to separate the packages 12, 12 from each other. As shown, the configurations or holes 20, 20 are next formed or punched in each of the carrier strips 16, 16 to accommodate the pinwheel feed device on the computer-printer, as previously discussed, to assure proper registry of the fill-in material with the preprinted material on each letter piece 12.

The partially completed assembly 10 may be fan folded along the lines of weakening 14, 14 as shown in FIG. 6 for storage and later completion on a computer-printer or, if desired, may be fed directly into and through a computer-printer associated with the apparatus for making the assembly 10 to complete the fill-in operations. Upon completion of the printing operations, carrier strips 16, 16 are preferably removed from the assembly 10 by tearing along the lines of weakening 18, 18, and the individual letter packages 12, 12 separated from each other by tearing along the lines of weakening 14, 14. If desired, the assembly 10 may be provided without the lines of weakening 18, 18 and 14, 14. In this instance, the carrier strips 16, 16 are separated from the assembly 10 and the individual letter packages 12, 12 separated from each other by slitting the web 44 after all printing operations have been completed.

After the completed letter packages 12, 12 have been separated from each other, the packages are further processed through a conventional folding machine and folded down to mailing size for insertion into standard window cut envelopes (not shown).

The present invention has been illustrated with reference to a one-up method of making letter packages whereby a single longitudinal series of letter packages is formed. However, it should be understood that the method of the present invention may also be employed to simultaneously make a plurality of strips of series connected letter packages, the strips being arranged in side-by-side relation as, for example, in a two-up or

three-up process, and such modified forms of the illustrated method are contemplated within the scope of the invention. When a two-up or three-up process is used, the letter package strips may, for example, be separated from each other by slitting the web longitudinally, or if desired, additional longitudinally extending lines of weakening may be formed on the web to permit the letter packages to be separated from each other as by tearing along the latter lines of weakening.

We claim:

1. A method for making personalized letter packages, each of said packages including a letter piece having the name of an associated recipient imprinted thereon and a collated return item having the name of said associated recipient imprinted thereon, said method comprising the steps of continuously advancing a plurality of elongated webs of sheet material in a longitudinal direction, cutting a longitudinally spaced series of window openings in one of said webs to generally define a longitudinal series of connected letter piece blanks, each of said blanks having an associated one of said window openings therein, providing a plurality of return items, applying one of said return items to the rear surface of each of said advancing blanks to cover said one window opening therein and a portion of the blank surrounding said one window opening to expose a portion of the front surface of said one return item in said one window opening, applying a generally U-shaped line of adhesive to the rear surface of each of said advancing blanks to partially surround an associated one of said return items and open toward an associated marginal portion of said one web, successively cutting a plurality of patches from another of said advancing webs, attaching one of said patches to the rear surface of each of said advancing blanks by an associated one of said U-shaped lines of adhesive to overlie at least a portion of an associated one of said return items, advancing said one web through a computerized printing apparatus and imprinting the name of an associated recipient in at least one position on the front surface of each of said blanks and on said exposed surface portion of said return item associated therewith, and successively separating each of said letter piece blanks from the other of said blanks along longitudinally spaced and generally transversely extending lines of separation.

2. A method for making personalized letter packages as set forth in claim 1 including the step of forming a longitudinally spaced series of thumb cut-out openings

in said one advancing web spaced inwardly from an associated longitudinally extending side edge thereof.

3. A method for making personalized letter packages as set forth in claim 1 including the step of imprinting a message on the front surface of each of said letter blanks before the step of advancing said one web through said computerized printing apparatus.

4. A method for making personalized letter packages as set forth in claim 1 including the additional step of applying at least one spot of release adhesive to the rear surface of each of said letter blanks before the step of applying one of said return items thereto and wherein the step of applying one of said return items is further characterized as attaching one of said return items to the rear surface of each of said letter blanks by an associated said one spot of adhesive.

5. A method for making personalized letter packages as set forth in claim 4 wherein each of said return items includes an envelope having a closing flap and wherein the step of applying one of said return items is further characterized as attaching the closing flap associated with each one of said return items to the rear surface of an associated one of said letter blanks by an associated said one spot of adhesive.

6. A method for making personalized letter packages as set forth in claim 1 including the step of forming a longitudinally spaced series of transversely extending lines of weakening on said one web to separate each of said letter blanks from the other of said letter blanks and wherein the step of successively separating each of said letter blanks is further characterized as tearing along said transversely extending line of weakening to separate each said letter blanks from the other of said blanks.

7. A method for making personalized letter packages as set forth in claim 1 including the additional step of forming at least one longitudinally extending line of weakening on an associated longitudinally extending marginal edge portion of said one web to define a longitudinally extending carrier strip between said one longitudinally extending line of weakening and an associated longitudinally extending side edge of said one web.

8. A method for making personalized letter packages as set forth in claim 6 including the additional step of forming a longitudinally spaced series of configurations on said carrier strip.

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