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US 5350061 A US 5186566 A  
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(54) Title of the Invention: **Card storage device**  
Abstract Title: **Card storage device comprising a box held in a ring binder**

(57) A card storage device 10 comprises a box having a flat rigid base wall 12, a side wall 14 extending around the periphery of the base wall and a lid 16 hinged to the side wall for moving between an open position for accessing cards (46, Fig.1) in the box, and a closed position for covering and protecting the cards in the box. There is a plurality of divider walls 40, 42 within the box forming a plurality of internal compartments for receiving the cards; and a spine (32, Fig.2) disposed along a part of the side wall. The spine 32 has a plurality of apertures (34, Fig.2) therethrough, enabling the first box to be held in a ring binder (36, Fig.2). A cutaway (54, Fig.5) may be provided in at least one divider wall for enabling the cards to be eased out of the compartment by a person's finger. There may also be provided a plurality of ribs (56, Fig.5) on the underside of the lid, which correspond to a plurality of similarly sized recesses (58, Fig.5) in the side wall and divider walls and fit into the recesses when the lid is closed.

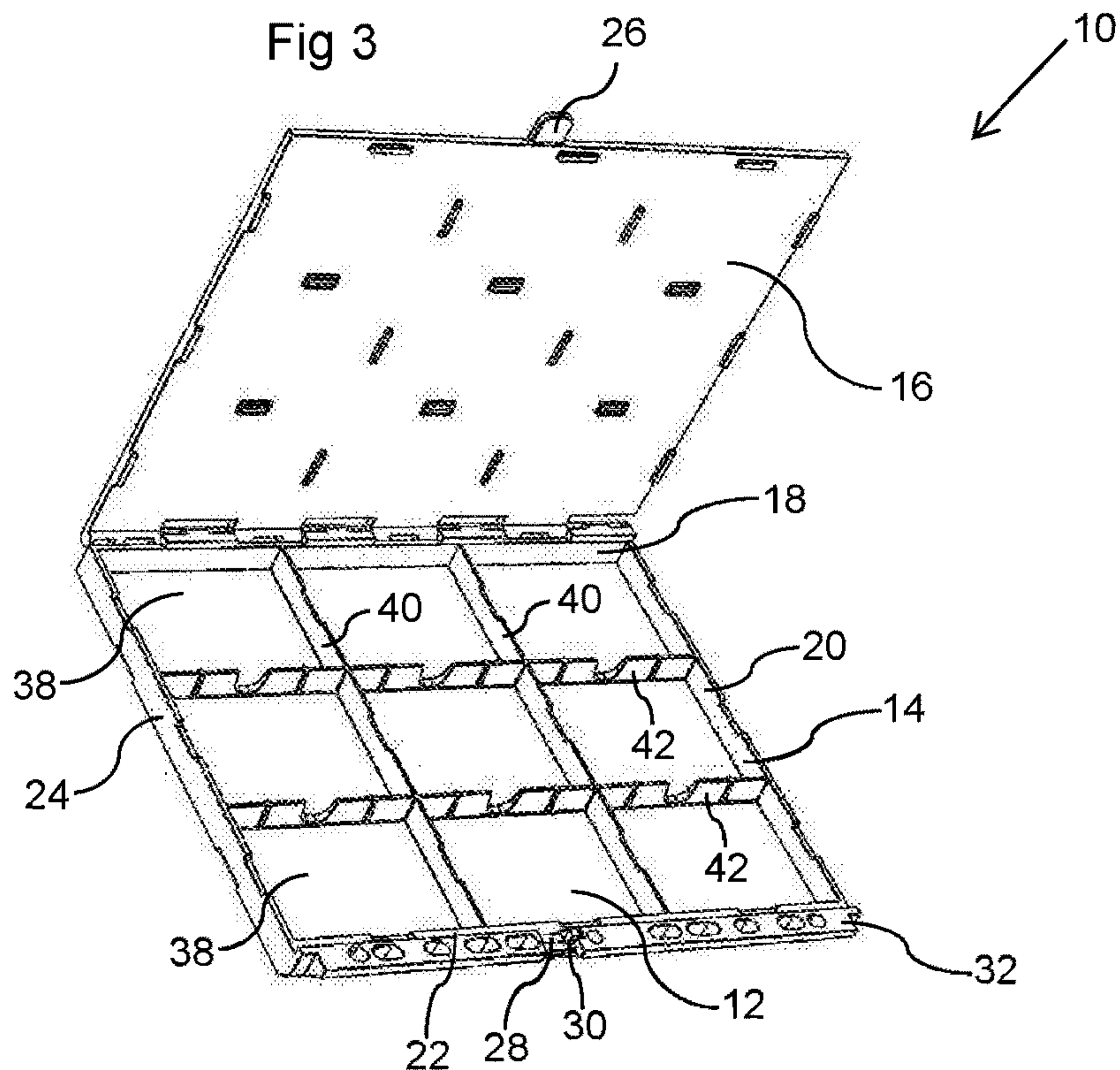


Fig 1

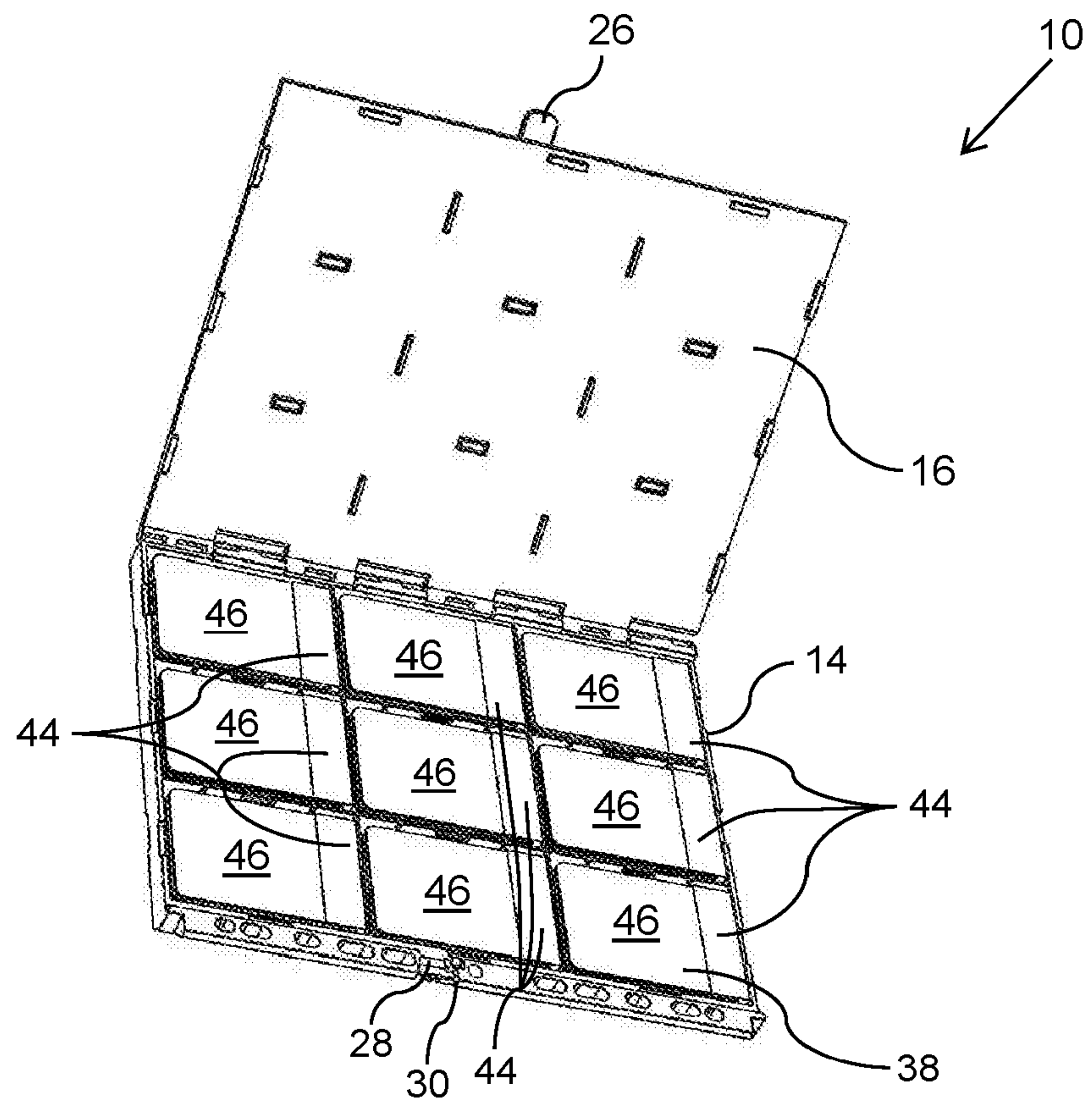


Fig 2

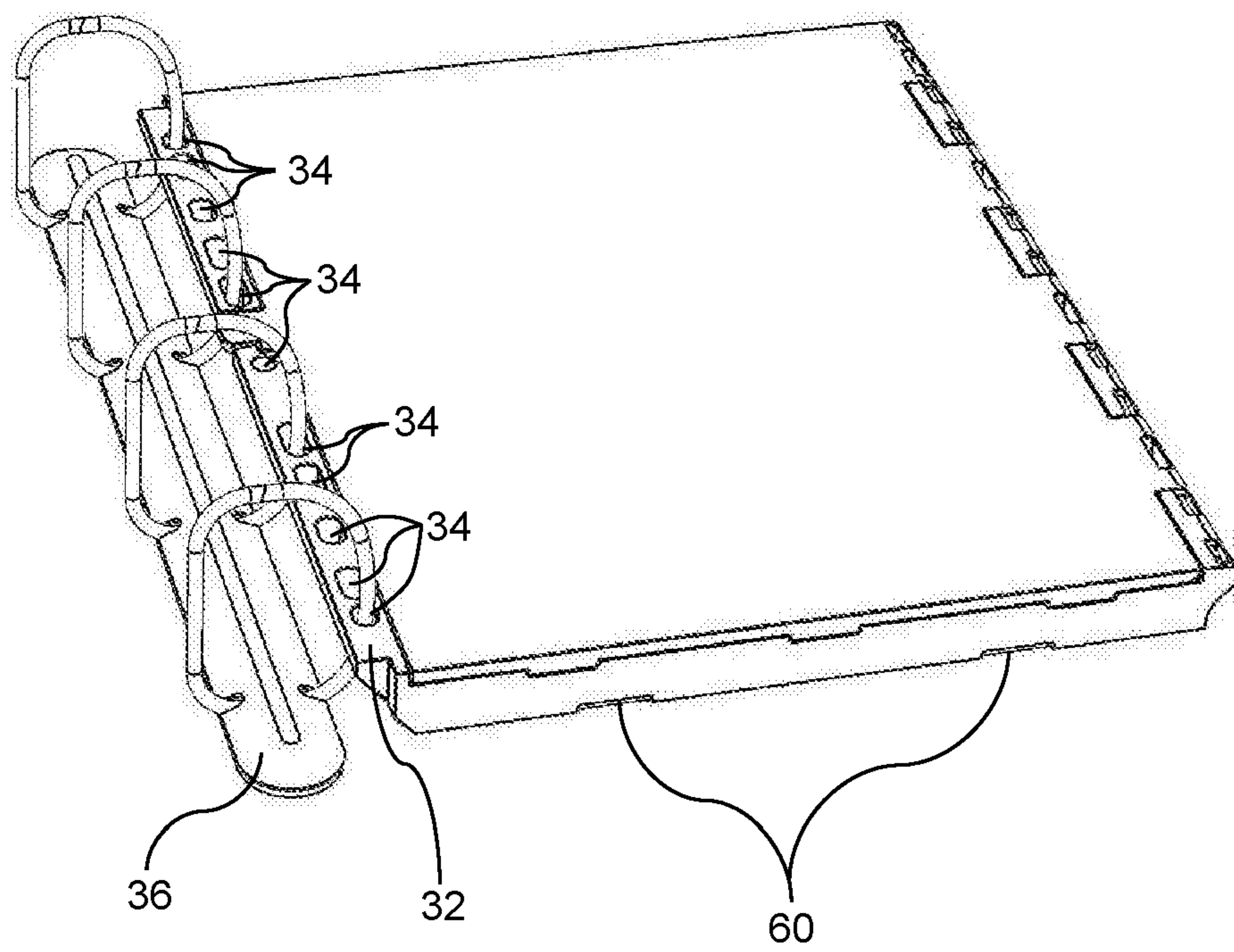




Fig 3

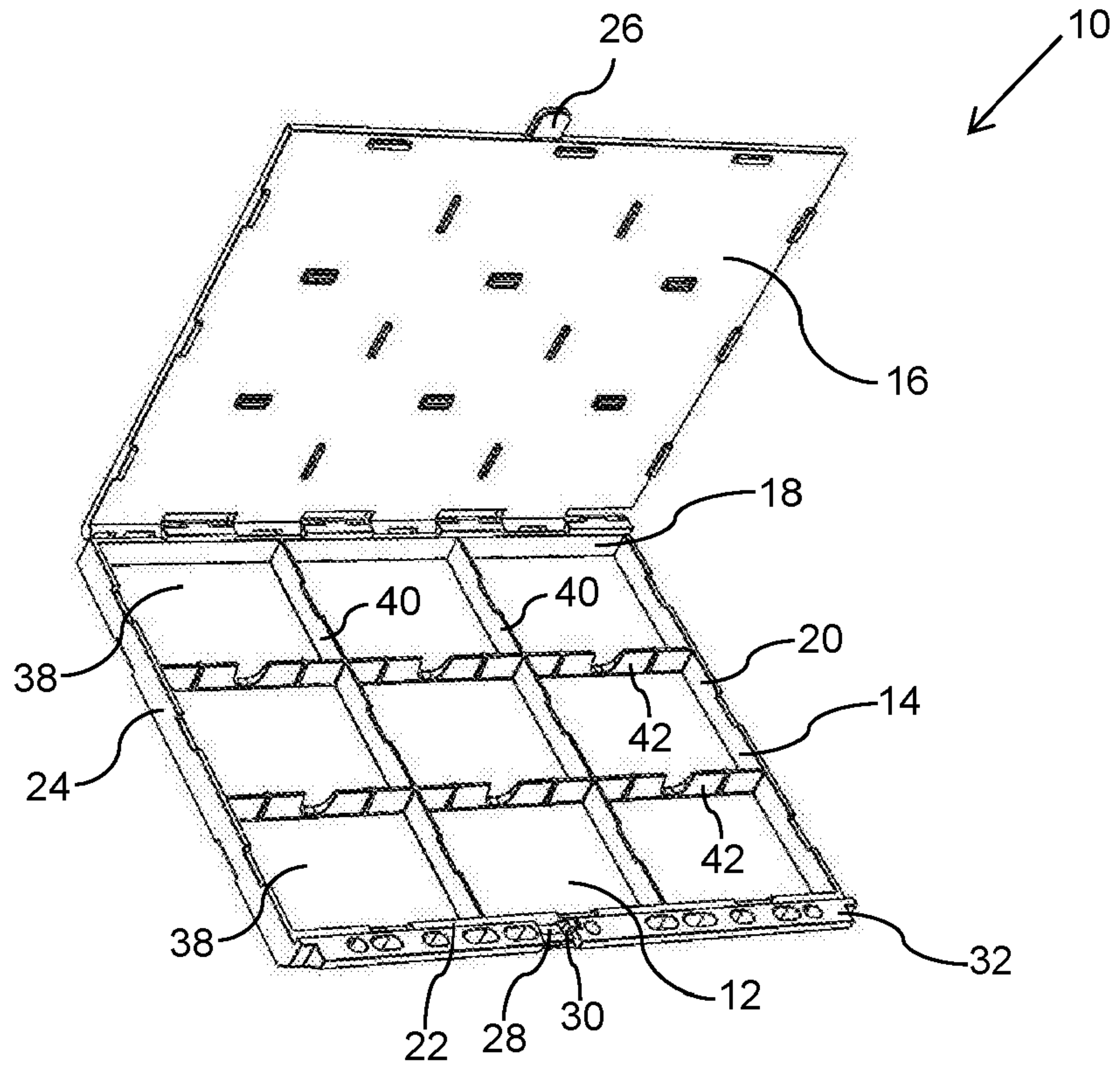


Fig 4

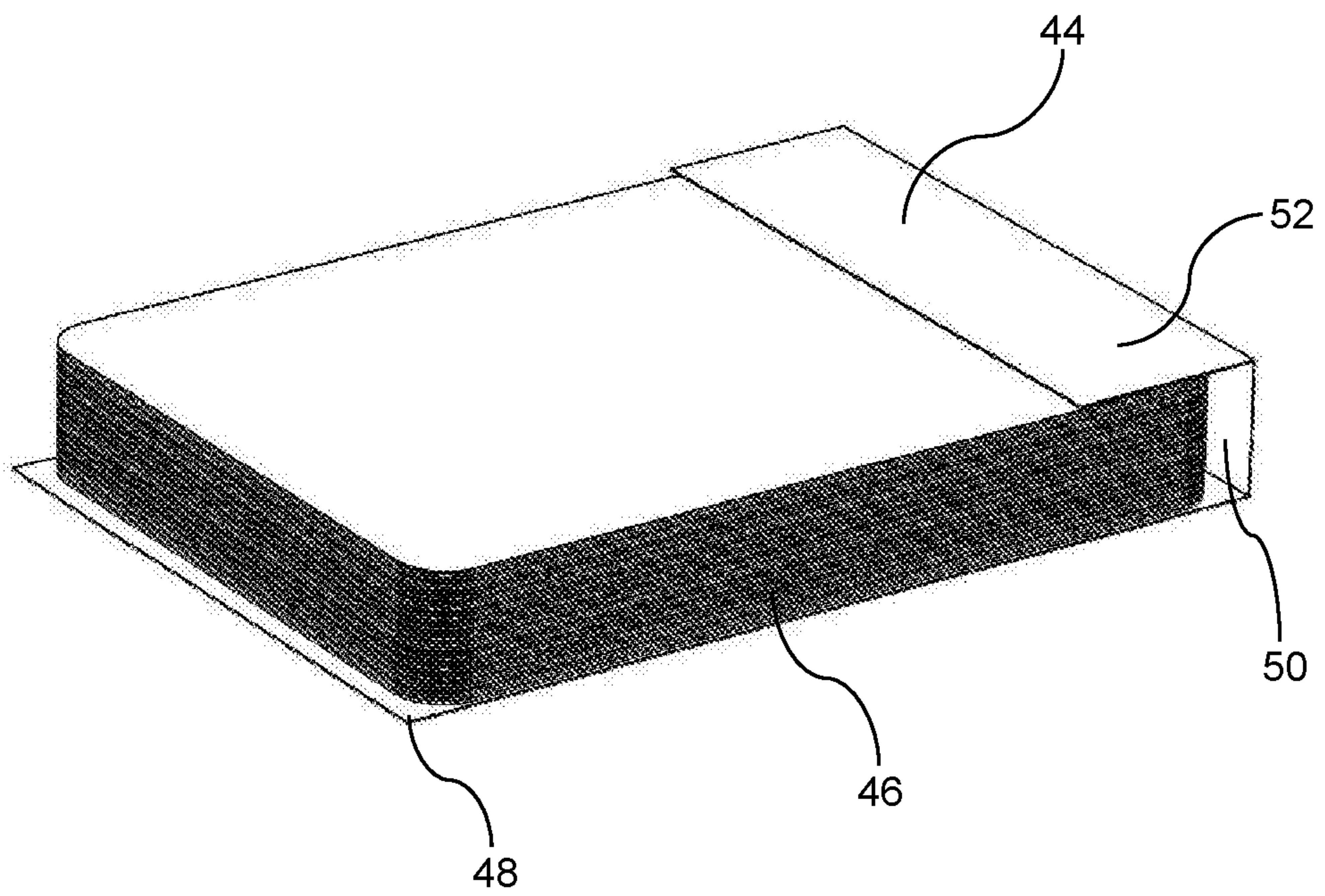


Fig 5

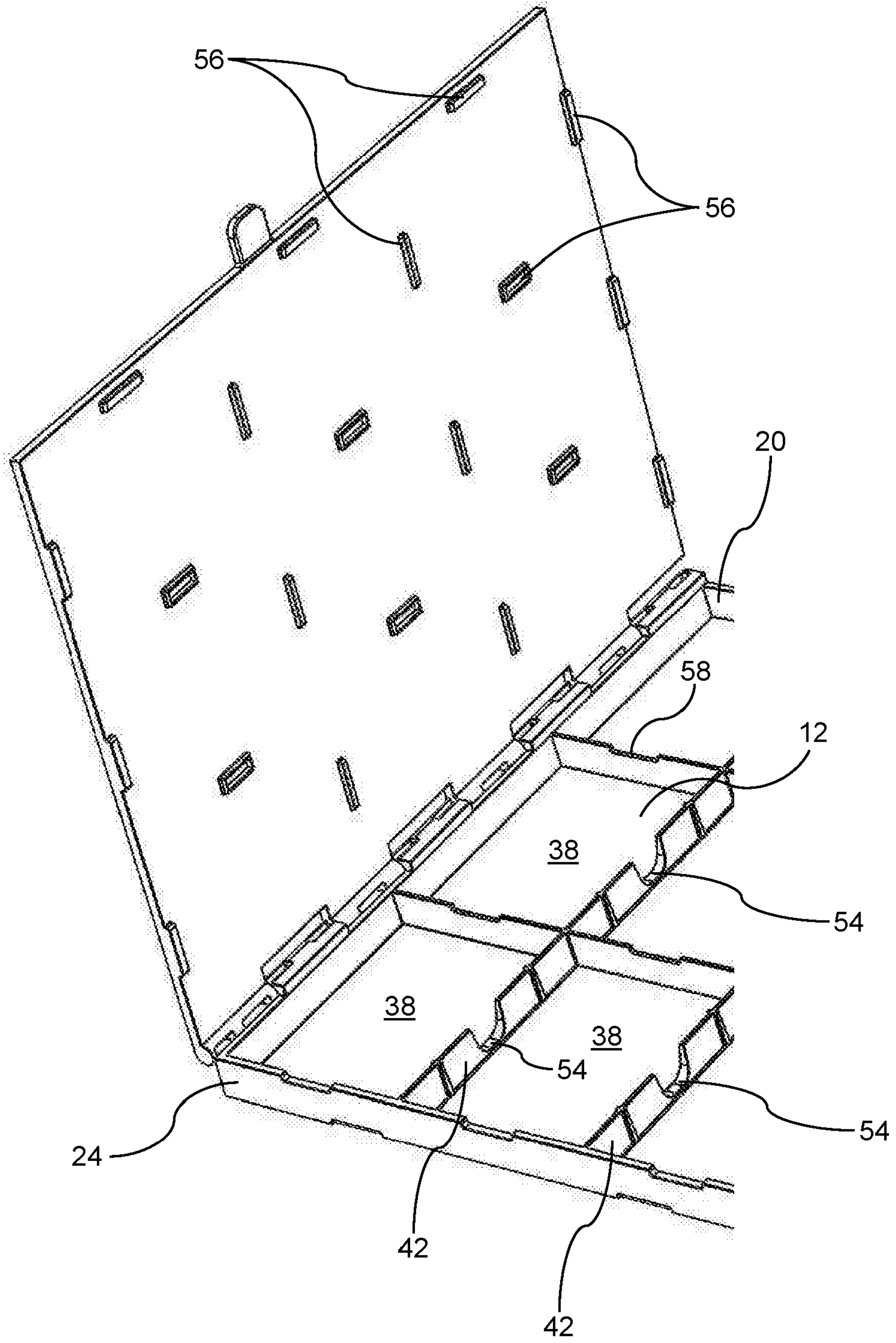




Fig 6

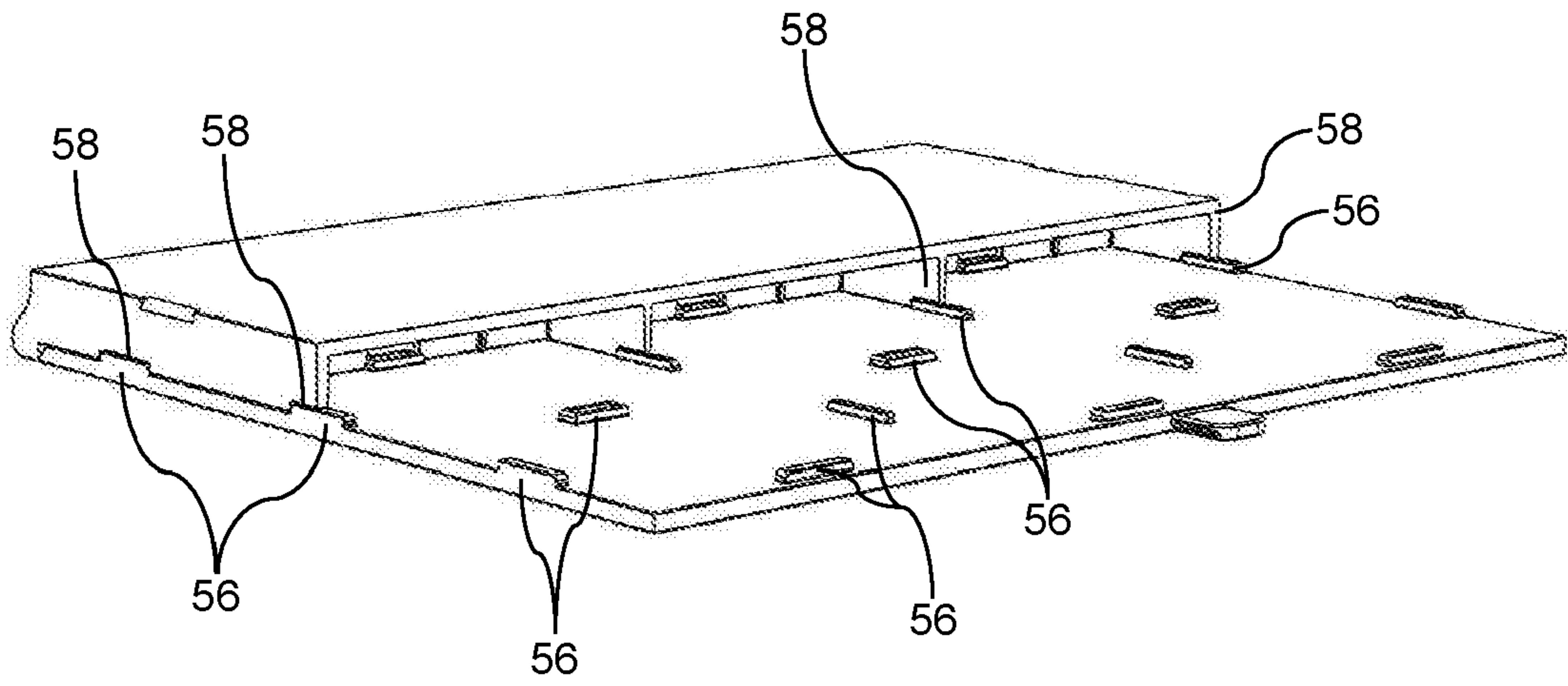
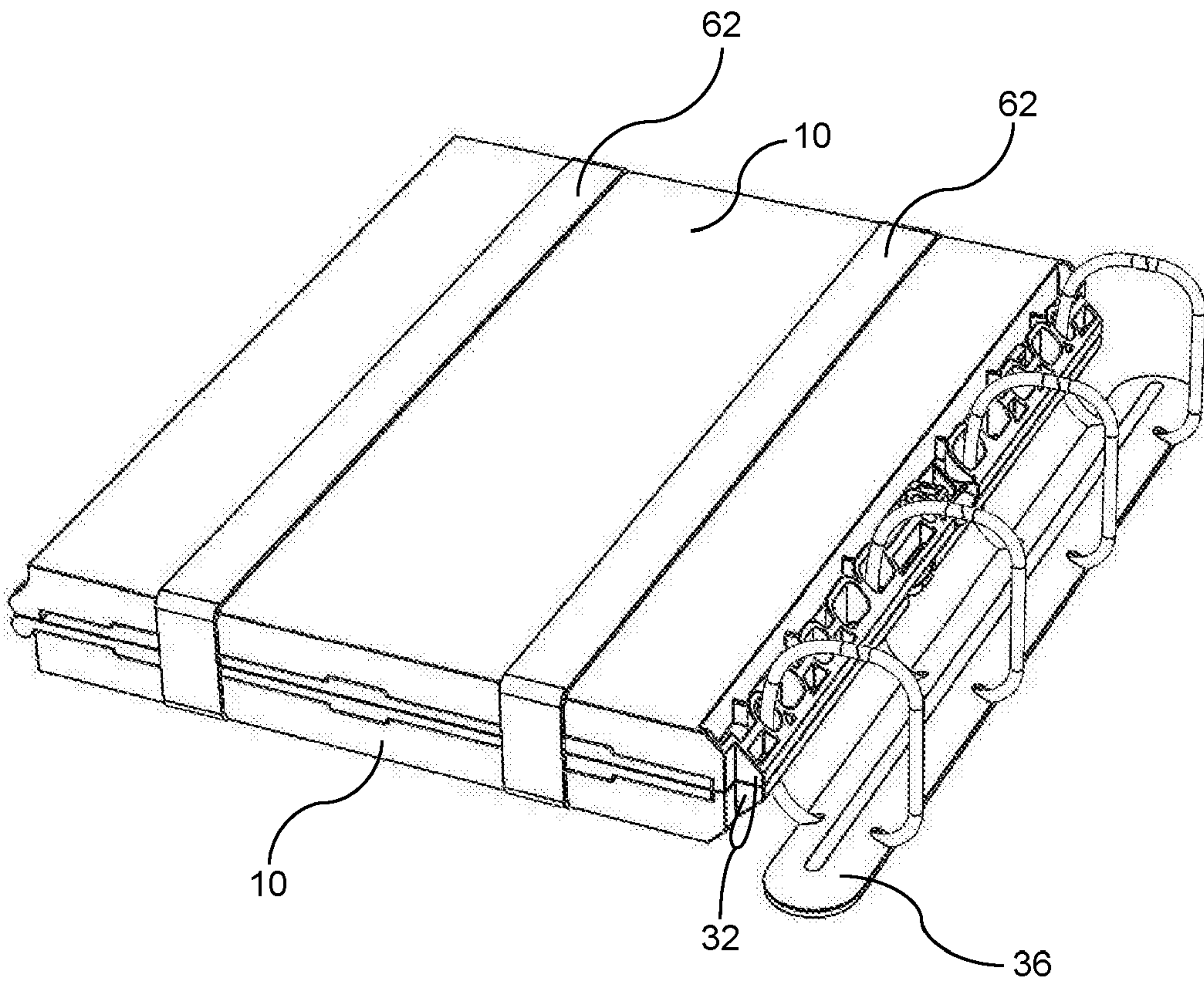


Fig 7



## CARD STORAGE DEVICE

The present invention relates to a card storage device and particularly but not exclusively to a card storage device for collectable trading cards.

5

## BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

Collectors of trading cards need to store them flat and in a controlled environment to maintain their value. The cards are usually made from a thick paper and are printed with an image and some descriptive text. The cards may show sporting personalities, or fantasy characters, for example. Deterioration of a card, including bending of the card, reduces its value.

The most common way to store trading cards is in a transparent plastic sleeve, with pockets for each card, known as a pocket page. Typically, a pocket page has nine pockets and has holes at one side for storing the pocket page in a ring binder.

When the ring binder is lying flat, ie horizontally on a surface such as a table, the metal spine of the ring binder causes the sleeve to ride up on one side. Over time, this causes a permanent curve in any cards held in the pockets, thus reducing their desirability and value.

Furthermore, when the ring binder is stored vertically, for example on a bookshelf, then dependent on the loading of the pocket pages and binder, the pocket pages and cards tend to drop in the binder and splay outwardly at the bottom and not stay together. Also, some of the pocket pages arch or bend over at their upper end due to the weight of cards in the upper row of pockets. This is particularly marked, if for example, there are no cards in the lower pockets. However, even if there are cards in the lower pockets, these too can curl under the weight of the cards above. The pocket pages themselves offer no structural support to the cards, save to keep them held in a spaced relationship, allowing them to be viewed.

Another problem of the plastics pocket pages is that the cards can be difficult to remove, especially if they are a tight fit in the pockets and the cards are bent.

35

It is an object of the present invention to reduce or substantially obviate the aforementioned problems.

## STATEMENT OF INVENTION

5 According to the present invention there is provided a card storage device comprising a box having a flat rigid base wall, a side wall extending around the periphery of the base wall and a lid hinged to the side wall for moving between an open position for accessing cards in the box, and a closed position for covering and protecting the cards in the box;

10 a plurality of divider walls within the box forming a plurality of internal compartments for receiving the cards;

and a spine disposed along a part of the side wall, the spine having a plurality of apertures therethrough, enabling the box to be held in a ring binder.

15 Advantageously, a card or group of cards can be held flat in an internal compartment of the box. In the closed position, the lid covers the cards and holds them in their compartments. The rigid nature of the walls prevents any of the cards being exposed to bending.

20 When vertical, the box does not slump over, but rather is rigid and is held substantially upright.

The base wall may be rectangular and the side wall may comprise first, second, third and fourth walls.

25 The card storage device may be sized such that a collectable card pocket page, particularly the portion of the pocket page in which the cards are disposed, does not substantially extend outside of the periphery of the card storage device.

30 The lid may be hinged to the first wall.

The lid may be releasably fastened to the third wall, opposite the first wall.

The spine may be disposed along the outer side of the third wall, opposite the first wall.

35 The spine may be chamfered away towards the base wall side of the box. When the box is held in a ring binder, the angled side of the spine prevents the box from riding up on the spine of the ring binder.



A cutaway may be provided in at least one divider wall of each compartment for enabling the cards to be eased out of the compartment using a person's finger.

5

A plurality of ribs may be disposed on the underside of the lid, which correspond to a plurality of similarly sized recesses in the side wall and divider walls and fit into the recesses when the lid is closed.

10 A rib and recess may be positioned in every wall and/or divider wall of every compartment.

The ribs and corresponding recesses may be provided midway along the walls and/or divider walls of each compartment.

15

Advantageously, the side wall, divider wall and ribs form a continuous barrier to cards moving between compartments. The ribs extend downwardly into the side wall and divider walls, effectively creating an overlap.

20 The box may be made from plastics. The plastics may be a polypropylene. The box may be made from other suitable materials such as strong card, cardboard or metal.

A card lifting device may be provided within at least one of the compartments.

25 The card lifting device may comprise a flat base member for receiving the cards, an end wall and an upper wall. The upper wall may extend partially across the base member. The upper wall may be resilient. The resilient upper wall may be biased towards a position angled away from the flat base member and any cards placed on the base member.

30

The card lifting device may be removable from the compartment.

The card lifting device may be movable between two configurations. In the first configuration at least a portion of the flat base member of the lifting device may abut a portion of the flat rigid base wall of the card storage device within said compartment.  
35 In the second configuration a portion of the upper wall of the lifting device and/or a portion of the flat base member of the lifting device may abut a portion of the flat rigid



base wall of the card storage device within said compartment. In the second configuration the flat base member of the lifting device is at an angle to the flat rigid base wall of the card storage device.

5 In other words, the card lifting device can be turned over in a compartment, it's rear face being disposed at an angle, thereby presenting a suitable surface on which a card can be laid for presentation purposes.

10 In the second configuration the card lifting device serves the purposes of providing a display stand for cards.

A card storage system may comprise two card storage devices according to the present invention and at least one resilient strap for releasably securing the card storage devices together.

15

The card storage system may also comprise at least one card pocket page. The or each card pocket page may be disposed between the two card storage devices.

The rigid nature of the storage devices ensures that the pocket page is held flat.

20

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

For a better understanding of the present invention, and to show more clearly how it may be carried into effect, reference will now be made by way of example only to the accompanying drawings, in which:

25

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of the box of the invention, with the lid in an open position and a plurality of trading cards in the internal compartments;

30 Figure 2 shows a perspective view of the box of Figure 1, with the lid closed and the spine of the box being held in a ring binder;

Figure 3 shows a perspective view of the box of Figure 1 in an open position without any cards;

35

Figure 4 shows a perspective view of a stack of trading cards and a lifting element for assisting in lifting cards out of an internal compartment of the box of Figure 1:

Figure 5 shows a perspective view of the lid of the box of Figure 1;

Figure 6 shows a perspective view of the closed box, upside down, with the box cut  
5 away; and

Figure 7 shows a perspective view of a pair of boxes of the invention, held in a ring  
binder and held together by straps.

## 10 DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring firstly to Figures 1 and 3, a card storage device is indicated at 10. The card  
storage device 10 is provided as a rectangular box having a flat rigid base wall 12, a  
side wall 14 extending around the periphery of the base wall 12 and a lid 16 hinged to  
15 the side wall 14.

The side wall 14 comprises first, second, third and fourth side walls 18, 20, 22, 24  
extending along the four sides of the rectangular box. The lid 16 is hinged to the upper  
edge of the first side wall 18. A tab 26 extends from the opposing free side of the lid  
20 16. A recess 28 is provided in the third wall 22 for receiving the tab 26, when the lid is  
closed. A latch 30 is disposed to one side of the recess and resiliently engages over  
the tab 26, when positioned in the recess 28. The storage device can be seen in the  
closed position in Figure 2.

25 A spine 32 is provided along the third side wall 22. The spine 32 is integral with the  
third side wall 22. The spine 32 is slightly shorter than the length of the third side wall  
22 and both ends of the spine are set back a short distance from the ends of the box.  
For example, the ends of the spine may be set back around 5-10mm. The spine 32 is  
not rectangular in cross section, but rather, is formed as a trapezium with one corner  
30 effectively chamfered or cut away at an angle. The underside corner is cut-away. The  
angled surface created extends from the base of the third side wall 22 to a position  
around two thirds of the way up the distal side.

The spine 32 has a plurality of spaced apertures 34 therethrough, for enabling the card  
35 storage device 10 to be held in a ring binder 36. The shape of the spine 32 enables  
the card storage device 10 to lie flat in the ring binder file, because the spine is not

lifted by the spine of the ring binder. Rather the ring binder spine fits into the “cut away” area of the spine 32.

5 The inside of the box 10 is divided by a plurality of divider members into compartments 38. In the example shown, there are two divider walls 40 extending between the first and third sides 18, 22 and two divider walls 42 extending between the second and fourth sides 20,24. The dividers are positioned to create equally sized compartments, although it will be appreciated that the compartments could be sized for specific cards.

10 Referring in particular to Figures 1 and 4, a card lifting device 44 for supporting a number of cards 46 can be provided in one or more of the compartments. The card lifting device 44 includes a flat base member 48 for receiving the cards, an end wall 50 and an upper wall 52. The base member 48 substantially fills the compartment 38 and supports the entire base of the cards 46. The upper wall 52, may extend partially  
15 across the base member. The upper wall may be resilient. The resilient upper wall may be biased towards a position angled away from the flat base member and any cards placed on the base member.

20 The card lifting device 44 may be manufactured from resilient plastics material, strong card, cardboard or metal.

In use, the card lifting device 44 sits in a compartment and the upper wall 52, which is angled up, enables it to be lifted upwardly for easy removal of any cards on the lifting device 44. When the lid 16 of the box closes, the upper wall 52 of the lifting device is  
25 pressed downwardly into the compartment over the cards. The upper wall 52 springs back up on opening of the lid 16.

Referring also to Figure 5, the divider walls 42 extending between the second and fourth walls 20, 24, have U-shaped cutaways or through apertures 54 disposed at the  
30 mid-point of each compartment 38. The cutaways 54 extend proximate to the base wall 12 and extend the full depth of the divider walls. In other words, the sides of any cards in a compartment are accessible through the respective cut-away. The cutaways 54 enable cards in a compartment 38 to be lifted, by placing a finger through the cutaway.

35

The boundary of each compartment 38 is also demarked by a protrusion or rib 56 disposed on the underside of the lid 16. The protrusions 56 are around 20mm long



and 5mm high. The protrusions 56 fit into corresponding recesses 58, disposed in the upper edges of the side wall 14 and divider walls 40, 42.

5 This is clearly shown in Figure 6, with the storage device 10 upside down. It will be appreciated that when the device 10 is on its side or upside down, there may be a tendency for cards to slip between compartments 38, under the lid. The protrusions 56 with the outer wall 14 and divider walls 40,42, create an uninterrupted wall around each compartment between the base wall 12 and the lid 16, thereby preventing any lateral movement of cards 46 held in the device 10. Cards are unable to slide on the  
10 underside surface of the lid 16.

Referring in particular to Figure 2, the outer corner edges of the device 10 are flattened or chamfered off in two places to provide strap guide areas 60. The strap guide areas 60 are on the base wall side 12 of the device 10, and are disposed on the second and  
15 fourth walls 20,24. The strap guide areas 60 are spaced apart, typically around a quarter of the way along the walls 20,24 from respective sides of the device 10. As shown in Figure 7, two storage devices 10 are intended to be placed lid to lid, against one another. Pocket pages can be positioned and held flat between the lids of the opposing adjacent lids 16. Straps 62, preferably elasticated, are positioned around the  
20 storage devices 10 to hold them together. The straps 62 are retained in the strap guide areas 60, by the raised corners of the box on either side. In other words, lateral sliding of the straps is prevented.

It is envisaged that storage devices 10 will be provided in pairs, with the straps 62.  
25 Because the devices are positioned lid-to-lid, it will be appreciated that they can be placed in ring binders 36 either way up, because the chamfering of the spine 32 lies on the base wall side of the device 10.

In use, cards can be stored in the storage compartments 38, with or without a card  
30 lifting device 44. The cards are stored flat, cannot move between compartments, can be held in ring binders, and are easily accessible.

The embodiment(s) described above is provided by way of example only, and various changes and modifications will be apparent to persons skilled in the art without  
35 departing from the scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

## CLAIMS

1. A card storage device comprising a box having a flat rigid base wall, a side wall extending around the periphery of the base wall and a lid hinged to the side wall for moving between an open position for accessing cards in the box, and a closed position for covering and protecting the cards in the box;  
5 a plurality of divider walls within the box forming a plurality of internal compartments for receiving the cards;  
and a spine disposed along a part of the side wall, the spine having a plurality  
10 of apertures therethrough, enabling the box to be held in a ring binder.
2. A card storage device as claimed in claim 1, in which the base wall is rectangular and the side wall comprises first, second, third and fourth walls.
- 15 3. A card storage device as claimed in claim 2, in which the lid is hinged to the first wall.
4. A card storage device as claimed in claim 3, in which the lid is fastened to the third wall, opposite the first wall.  
20
5. A card storage device as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 4, in which the spine is disposed along the outer side of the third wall, opposite the first wall.
6. A card storage device as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the spine is  
25 chamfered away towards the base wall side of the box.
7. A card storage device as claimed in any preceding claim, in which a cutaway is provided in at least one divider wall of each compartment for enabling the cards to be eased out of the compartment using a person's finger.  
30
8. A card storage device as claimed in any preceding claim, in which a plurality of ribs are disposed on the underside of the lid, which correspond to a plurality of similarly sized recesses in the side wall and divider walls and fit into the recesses when the lid is closed.  
35
9. A card storage device as claimed in claim 8, in which a rib and recess are positioned in every wall and/or divider wall of every compartment.

10. A card storage device as claimed in claim 8 or claim 9, in which said ribs and corresponding recesses are provided midway along the walls and/or divider walls of each compartment.

5

11. A card storage device as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the box is made from card, cardboard, metal or plastics.

10

12. A card storage device as claimed in claim 11, in which the plastics is polypropylene.

13. A card storage device as claimed in any preceding claim, in which a card lifting device is provided within at least one of the compartments.

15

14. A card storage device as claimed in claim 13, in which the card lifting device comprises a flat base member for receiving the cards, an end wall and an upper wall.

20

15. A card storage device as claimed in claim 14, in which the upper wall extends partially across the base member.

25

16. A card storage device as claimed in claim 15, in which the upper wall is resilient and is biased towards a position angled away from the flat base member and any cards placed on the base member.

30

17. A card storage system comprising two card storage devices as claimed in any preceding claim and at least one resilient strap for releasably securing the card storage devices together.

35





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**Examiner:** Marc Collins

**Claims searched:** 1-17

**Date of search:** 18 May 2020

**Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17**

**Documents considered to be relevant:**

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
X	1-17	US 5087145 A (COOLEY) See whole document especially figure 3.
X	1-17	US 5350061 A (GUNN) See whole document especially figures 1-4.
X	1-17	US 2223560 A (FRIEDLAENDER) See whole document especially figures.
X	1-17	US 5186566 A (CAMERON) See whole document especially figures.
X	1-17	US 2005/0166440 A1 (SHARP) See whole document especially figures 5A and 5B.

**Categories:**

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

**Field of Search:**

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC<sup>X</sup> :

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC

B42F

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report

WPI, EPODOC



**International Classification:**

<b>Subclass</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Valid From</b>
B42F	0007/06	01/01/2006
B42F	0005/00	01/01/2006
B42F	0013/40	01/01/2006