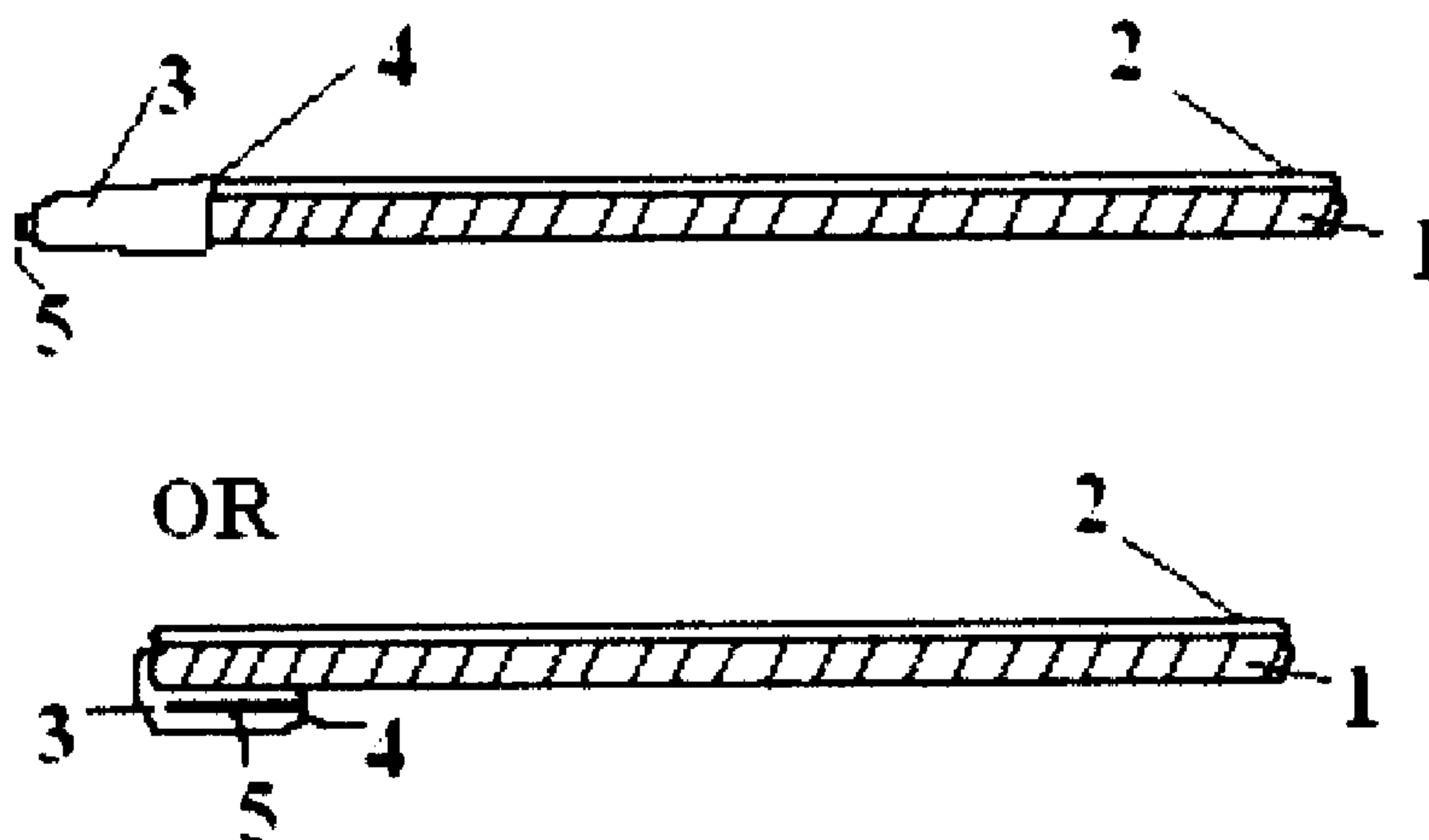




(22) Date de dépôt/Filing Date: 2004/12/15
(41) Mise à la disp. pub./Open to Public Insp.: 2006/06/15

(51) Cl.Int./Int.Cl. *A47G 9/00* (2006.01),
A47G 9/10 (2006.01), *A47G 9/02* (2006.01)
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(54) Titre : DISPOSITIF CONFORTABLE POLYVALENT, AUTONOME, TRANSFORMABLE
(54) Title: CONVERTIBLY SELF-CONTAINED, VERSATILE COMFORT DEVICE



**Longitudinal Cross-Sectional View
(Storage Pocket Position Variations Shown)**

(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A compact self-storing seating comfort article is described for providing comfortable seating accommodation to individuals. The seating comfort article is particularly useful to individuals attending indoor or outdoor events, in which bleacher or ground seating is typical. The seating comfort article includes an attached reversible pouch and a seat pad and/or blanket that may be easily folded or rolled into the pocket for transportation without the need or use for zippers, snaps or straps. The seat pad may be quilted, foam, filled, or inflatable, and may further include an extendable ground sheet storable within the seat pad or attached pouch. The seat pad and blanket may include a water resistant layer, and the article may include a carry strap. The article components may be used independently and converted between several functional positions for versatility of use by the individual desiring comfortable accommodation in a seated position or when lying down.

ABSTRACT

A compact self-storing seating comfort article is described for providing comfortable seating accommodation to individuals. The seating comfort article is particularly useful to individuals attending indoor or outdoor events, in which bleacher or ground seating is typical. The seating comfort article includes an attached reversible pouch and a seat pad and/or blanket that may be easily folded or rolled into the pocket for transportation without the need or use for zippers, snaps or straps. The seat pad may be quilted, foam, filled, or inflatable, and may further include an extendable ground sheet storable within the seat pad or attached pouch. The seat pad and blanket may include a water resistant layer, and the article may include a carry strap. The article components may be used independently and converted between several functional positions for versatility of use by the individual desiring comfortable accommodation in a seated position or when lying down.

SELF STORING SEATING COMFORT ARTICLE**CONTINUITY DATA**

[0001] This application claims priority to Canadian application 2,490,728, filed December 15, 2004.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention, the SELF STORING SEATING COMFORT ARTICLE herein referred to as the "invention" or the "article," relates generally to articles for providing comfort to a user. More particularly, the present invention relates to a self-storing, article that can be placed on, and is readily adaptable to any seating surface and/or over a seated individual to provide comfortable seating accommodation.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] There are many activities people seek to enjoy, such as outings to parks or attendance at outdoor and indoor sporting events. Accommodating clean, dry, warm and comfortable seating in an easy and satisfactorily adequate manner is always problematic.

[0004] For activities such as indoor and outdoor sporting events, camping, picnicking, etc., insufficient formal seating is available. Spectators often sit on lawn chairs or on the ground. In such situations, a blanket is commonly used to provide comfort while seated.

[0005] When seating accommodation is provided at events or in recreational settings, it is often in the form of bleachers, chairs, or benches of plastic, metal or wood. Such accommodations are generally quite uncomfortable and can often be cold, dirty and or damp. This may diminish overall enjoyment of the activity and may deter individuals from attending outdoor events, including individuals who are elderly or frail.

[0006] When attending an outdoor event, an individual may gather a multitude of various items necessary for user comfort or protection, such as blankets, seat cushions, and

hand and head warming garments. Transportation of these items may become a considerable burden to the user, and loose items may be forgotten or lost at the event.

[0007] Multipurpose combination articles are currently available for improving comfort in outdoor seating situations. Such articles may be self-storing, having manual fasteners such as zippers, snaps and/or straps for containment, and may contain pockets for storing additional items.

[0008] For example, US Patent No. 5,414,881 provides an article that allows the user one of three functional options. The article may be converted to a stadium lap blanket that may include one or more corner pockets for temporarily storing small items, or may be used as a rain covering with storable hood. A closable compartment is provided by means of hook and pile fastening material, and the article may be used as a seat cushion or transported if the entire unit is folded in a predetermined manner, secured by fastening and extending an elongated retaining strap around the body of the article.

[0009] Another example is found in US patent No. 4,991,245, which provides a portable pillow/lounge set convertible to and from a tote bag with handles. A ground cover sheet is folded and fastened at multiple points to form the generally flat tote bag having a plurality of article-holding compartments of which are also formed by the multiple folding and fastening points. A detachable inflatable pillow and cover sheet are provided, both of which require additional mounting and fastening to use.

[0010] US Patent No. 2,183,418 provides a convertible coverlet and pillow in which the coverlet may be folded and zipped within the pillow for transportation. Detailed instructions are provided for precise folding and zippered storing of the coverlet within the pillow.

[0011] Other examples can be found in the following US Patents: 2,611,899; 3,477,552; 3,381,306; 5,588,749; 5,454,125; 6,353,933; 5,921,626; and 4,190,918.

[0012] It is therefore desirable to provide a versatile combination seating comfort article that is compact, simple to manipulate, transport, and use.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0013] It is the objective of the present invention to obviate or mitigate at least one disadvantage of previous seating comfort articles.

[0014] In a first aspect, the present invention provides a seating comfort article comprising a reversible pouch member; and a covering(s) attached to the pouch, which is convertible between a stored position in which the covering is contained within the pouch, and an extended position in which at least a portion of the covering extends from the pouch.

[0015] In one embodiment, the covering is a seat pad for covering a seating surface. The seat pad may be a quilted, cushioned, foam filled, inflatable seat pad, or any combination thereof, and may include a water resistant surface for contacting the seating surface. The seat pad may be a self-inflating cushion, and/or may include an extendable ground sheet also storable within a pouch or in an enveloped portion of the seat pad.

[0016] The article may further comprise a blanket portion attached to the pouch, which is convertible between a stored position in which the blanket portion is contained within the pouch, and an extended position in which at least a portion of the blanket extends from the pouch. The blanket portion may be composed of fabric, water resistant material, or other materials. The blanket may include one or more pockets, which may be formed from a linear panel of blanket sheeting attached across the width of the blanket. In one embodiment, the pocket panel is top-stitched perpendicular to the blanket width to form a plurality of individual pockets.

[0017] In one embodiment, the seating comfort article so described with pouch, blanket and/or cushion, wherein the blanket may be rolled or folded into the pocket member to form a pillow.

[0018] In a further embodiment, the seating comfort article as described includes a carry strap that may be elasticized, adjustable, detachable, or any combination thereof.

[0019] In an embodiment, the pouch is elasticized or includes an elasticized edge.

[0020] In a separate embodiment, the covering is a blanket for covering a user while seated.

[0021] In a further embodiment, the article comprises further attachment means for securing accessories to the article.

[0022] In another embodiment, the article comprises further attachment means for attaching the article to a seat or wheelchair.

[0023] In a second aspect of the invention, the invention provides a method for storing a blanket and/or seat pad comprising the steps of: providing a blanket and/or seat pad having a reversible pouch affixed at one end thereof, the pouch having a certain width and having an opening along the width; folding the blanket and/or seat pad to a width similar to that of the pouch; rolling the folded blanket and/or seat pad towards the pouch; and enclosing the rolled blanket and/or seat pad within the pouch where it is therefore completely self contained.

[0024] In one embodiment, the blanket or seat pad is an inflatable seat pad, and the method includes the further step of allowing the seat pad to deflate simultaneously while rolling the blanket and/or seat pad towards the end pouch, and enclosing the roll within the pouch.

[0025] Other aspects and features of the present invention will become apparent to those ordinarily skilled in the art upon review of the following description of specific embodiments of the invention in conjunction with the accompanying figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0026] Embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the attached Figures, wherein:

Figure 1 is a side cross-sectional view of an embodiment of the invention with a seat pad and blanket shown in extended position, with and without the reversible pouch flipped under the seat pad;

Figure 2 is a side cross-sectional view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 1, with the blanket rolled within the reversible storage pouch;

Figure 3 is a side cross-sectional view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 1 during rolling into a storage position;

Figure 4 is a side cross-sectional view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 1 when in the compact storage position with the blanket and seat pad rolled into the storage pouch;

Figure 5 is a front perspective view of an embodiment of the invention rolled into a compact storage position;

Figure 6 is a top view of an embodiment of the invention shown with the seat cushion and blanket in fully extended position;

Figure 7 is a side cross-sectional view of a blanket and pocket in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

Figure 8A is a side cross-sectional view of a further embodiment of the invention in which a ground covering is provided; (This illustration either needs omitted, or the info. somehow combined with info. Of 8B to create a new diagram taking the place of both 8 a & b)

Figure 8B is a side view of an alternate embodiment of the invention, in which an extendible ground covering is storable within an enveloped cavity portion of the seat pad;

Figure 8C is a top (top or Bottom??) view of the embodiments shown in Figure 8A and 8B; and

Figure 9 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the invention shown attached to a chair with the seat pad in extended position and the blanket rolled into the storage, therefore forming a pillowed headrest or neck roll.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0027] Generally, the present invention provides a compact self-storing seating comfort article adaptable for use by an individual or group of individuals. The article generally includes a reversible storage pouch, which is attached to a seat pad and/or a blanket. In a preferred embodiment, both blanket and seat pad are present, and each can be rolled or folded independently or simultaneously into the storage pouch for simple transport.

[0028] In the embodiment of the invention shown in Figure 1, when the seating comfort article is in the fully extended position to accommodate comfortable seating, the seat pad (1) may be placed against a bench, the ground, or another seating surface by the user, and the user would sit on the seat pad (1) and use the extended blanket portion (2) to cover his or her lap and legs. As shown in Figure 1, the reversible pouch (3) may be flipped up or folded underneath the seat pad (1), if desired. In a preferred embodiment, the storage pouch (3) includes an elasticized portion (4) so as to simplify conversion of the article between the extended and storage positions, thereby avoiding the inclusion of manual fasteners such as snaps, zippers or straps.

[0029] With reference to Figure 2, the blanket (2) may be independently rolled within the pouch (3) for storage in situations where the user does not desire the warmth or protection of the blanket (2). In this configuration, the rolled blanket (2) within the pouch (3) may be used as an armrest or pillow by the user; leaving the extended portion of the seat pad (1) available for comfort use in sitting or lying down.

[0030] When the user no longer requires comfortable seating accommodation, the blanket (2) may be folded to the shape of the seat pad (1), and the seat pad (1) and blanket (2) may be simultaneously rolled together, as shown in Figure 3, and tucked into the elasticized pouch (3). Such a rolled compact storage position is shown in cross section view in Figure 4, and in front view in Figure 5. The embodiment shown in Figure 5 further includes a carry strap (5) to facilitate transport of the article and/or attachment of the article to other devices, as will be described below.

[0031] In an embodiment of the invention, the blanket (2) may be extended past the edge of the seat pad (1) to provide warmth and protection to the legs of the user. In addition, the blanket (2) may include other comfort features such as pockets (6) as shown in Figure 6. The pockets may be used to warm the hands of the user, and/or to store other articles such as mittens, keys, hats, or other articles as desired by the user. The blanket (2) and/or pockets (6) may incorporate attachment means such as snaps or Velcro™ loops for securing such additional articles to prevent inadvertent loss.

[0032] In the embodiment shown in Figure 7, the blanket (2) includes an elongated pocket panel attached to the blanket fabric. The elongated pocket panel may be top-stitched to create individual pocket portions as shown in Figure 6.

[0033] In a further embodiment of the article, a ground sheet (7) may be provided as shown in Figures 8A, 8B, and 8C. The ground sheet may be independently secured within the pouch (3) as shown in Figure 8A, or may be folded within a side cavity or enveloped portion of the seat pad (1) as shown in Figure 8C (B). Incorporation of a ground sheet may be particularly desirable during events at which spectators must seat themselves on the ground, in which case the ground sheet may serve to protect the clothing of the user from the ground surface, which may be damp or dirty. The ground sheet (7) may extend past the edge of the seat pad (1), as shown in Figure 8B(C). The ground sheet may be composed of water resistant fabric, or may simply be an extension of the seat pad.

[0034] The seating comfort article may also be used with conventional chairs and seats as shown in Figure 9. As shown, a carry strap (5) may be used to secure the article to the chair, and the blanket (2) may be rolled within the pocket (3) to provide a pillow. When not in use, the carry strap (5) may, if present, may be stored within the attached pouch (3). The carry strap may be elasticized or adjustable to provide maximum versatility of the seating comfort article.

[0035] Further, the comfort article may include fastener straps or other means of attaching the article to a specialized seat, for example to a wheelchair. In this embodiment, the

article may be custom-fitted to the specific needs or desires of the chair in accordance with the invention.

Modifications and Materials

[0036] The comfort article may be manufactured to any desired size to accommodate a given number of users, and many modifications to the basic embodiments discussed herein are possible to accommodate specific needs of one or more users. For example, any number of pockets (6) may be included within the blanket (2), and the blanket may be manufactured to any desired length or width.

[0037] The seat pad (1), if present, may be quilted, padded, foam-filled, and/or inflatable, and may be water resistant or include a waterproof, skid-resistant portion for placement against the seating surface. In a preferred embodiment, the seat pad (1) is a self-inflating foam-filled pad.

[0038] The blanket (2), if present, may be composed of fleece or other blanket fabric, or a water or wind-repellent surface, or any combination thereof.

Use of the Article

Many potential uses of the seating comfort article are inherent in the above description.

Additional uses of the article include, but are not limited to:

- a). when the seat pad (1) is squarely folded and one end is secured in the reversible pouch, the article may be used as a compact seat cushion, or backrest, with the blanket (2) either folded within the pouch (3) or independently extended for use;
- b). when the distal loose end is rolled partially up, the usable form is of an individual seat and back cushion with attached neck roll;
- c.) the entire article may be positioned in the reverse of that which is described in b), allowing the pillow pocket portion to be used as a foot covering, in which the blanket may remain housed within the pocket for added foot warmth or extended up and over the legs and lap of the user as desired;

d.) when fully rolled out, the article may include a blanket (2) with or without hand warming pockets in which accessories can be secured, and an attached seat-pad cushion (3), which may incorporate a moisture-proof barrier and may or may not include an additional extendible length of ground covering material. The article is quickly and easily convertible into a compact, self-contained pillow-roll form, and therefore becomes an easily transportable unit with or without a carry strap (5);

d.) the article may be custom-fitted to a particular specialized seating surface which may or may not include the use of fasteners.

e.) the seat pad may be a foam floor mat, for example a yoga mat or exercise mat.

[0039] The above-described embodiments of the present invention are intended to be examples only. Alterations, modifications and variations may be effected to the particular embodiments by those of skill in the art without departing from the scope of the invention, which is defined solely by the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed is:

1. A compact, self storing seating comfort article comprising:
 - An attached reversible pouch member for the article self-containment; and
 - a covering(s) attached to the pouch, convertible between a stored position in which the covering is contained within the pouch, and an extended position in which at least a portion of the covering(s) extends from the pouch.
2. The seating comfort article of claim 1 wherein the covering is a seat pad for covering a seating surface.
3. The seating comfort article of claim 2 wherein the seat pad is a quilted, cushioned, foam filled, or inflatable seat pad, or combination thereof.
4. The seating comfort article of claim 2 wherein the seat pad preferably includes a water resistant surface for contacting the seating surface.
5. The seating comfort article of claim 2 wherein the seat pad is preferably a self-inflating cushion.
6. The seating comfort article of claim 2 wherein the seat pad preferably includes an extendable ground sheet storable within a cavity or enveloped portion of the seat pad.
7. The seating comfort article of claim 2, including any variation so described in claims 3 through claim 6, further comprising a blanket portion attached to the pouch, that is convertible between a stored position in which the blanket portion is contained within the pouch, an extended position in which at least a portion of the blanket extends from the pouch.
8. The seating comfort article of claim 7 wherein the blanket portion is composed fabric.

9. The seating comfort article of claim 7 wherein the blanket portion includes a water resistant material.
10. The seating comfort article of claim 7, including any variation so described in claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the blanket includes at least one pocket.
11. The seating comfort article of claim 10 wherein the pocket is formed from an elongated fabric panel attached to the blanket fabric.
12. The seating comfort article of claim 11 wherein the pocket panel is top stitched perpendicular to the width of the blanket to form a plurality of individual pockets.
13. The seating comfort article of claim 7, including any variation so described in claim 8, claim 9, claim 10, claim 11, and claim 12, wherein the blanket may be rolled or folded into the reversible pouch member to form a pillow.
14. The seating comfort article of claim 1, including any variation so described in claims 2 through claim 13, further comprising a carry strap.
15. The seating comfort article of claim 14 wherein the carry strap is elasticized.
16. The seating comfort article of claim 14 wherein the carry strap is adjustable.
17. The seating comfort article of claim 14, including any variation so described in claim 15, and claim 16, wherein the carry strap is detachable from the article.
18. The seating comfort article of claim 1, including any variation so described in claims 2 through claim 17, wherein the reversible pouch has an elasticized opening.

19. The seating comfort article of claim 1, including any variation so described in claims 2 through claim 18, wherein the reversible pouch includes an elasticized edge.

20. The seating comfort article of claim 1, including any variation so described in claims 2 through claim 19, wherein the covering is a blanket for covering a user while seated.

21. The seating comfort article of claim 1, including any variation so described in claims 2 through claim 20, further comprising attachment means for securing accessories to the article.

22. The seating comfort article as in claim 1, including any variation so described in claims 2 through claim 21, further comprising attachment means for attaching the article to a seat or wheelchair.

23. The seating comfort article as in claim 1, including any variation so described in claims 2 through claim 22, further comprising attachment means for attaching the article to itself upon wrapping said article, or any portion thereof, around an object.

24. A method for storing a blanket and/or seat pad comprising the steps of:

- providing a blanket and/or seat pad having a reversible pouch affixed at one end thereof, the pouch having a certain width and having an opening along the width;
- folding the blanket and/or seat pad to a width similar to that of the pocket width;
- rolling the folded blanket and/or seat pad towards the pouch; and
- enclosing the rolled blanket and/or seat pad within the pocket.

- Need to somehow add: configuration of article components, design and method of rolling for storage, culminate in producing its exclusively "compact" form. (at least claim something about compact design)

25. The method as in claim 23 wherein the blanket or seat pad is an inflatable seat pad, and wherein the method includes the further step of simultaneously deflating the seat pad while, or prior to, rolling the blanket and/or seat pad towards the pouch, and enclosing these rolled components within the reversible pouch.

Drawings:

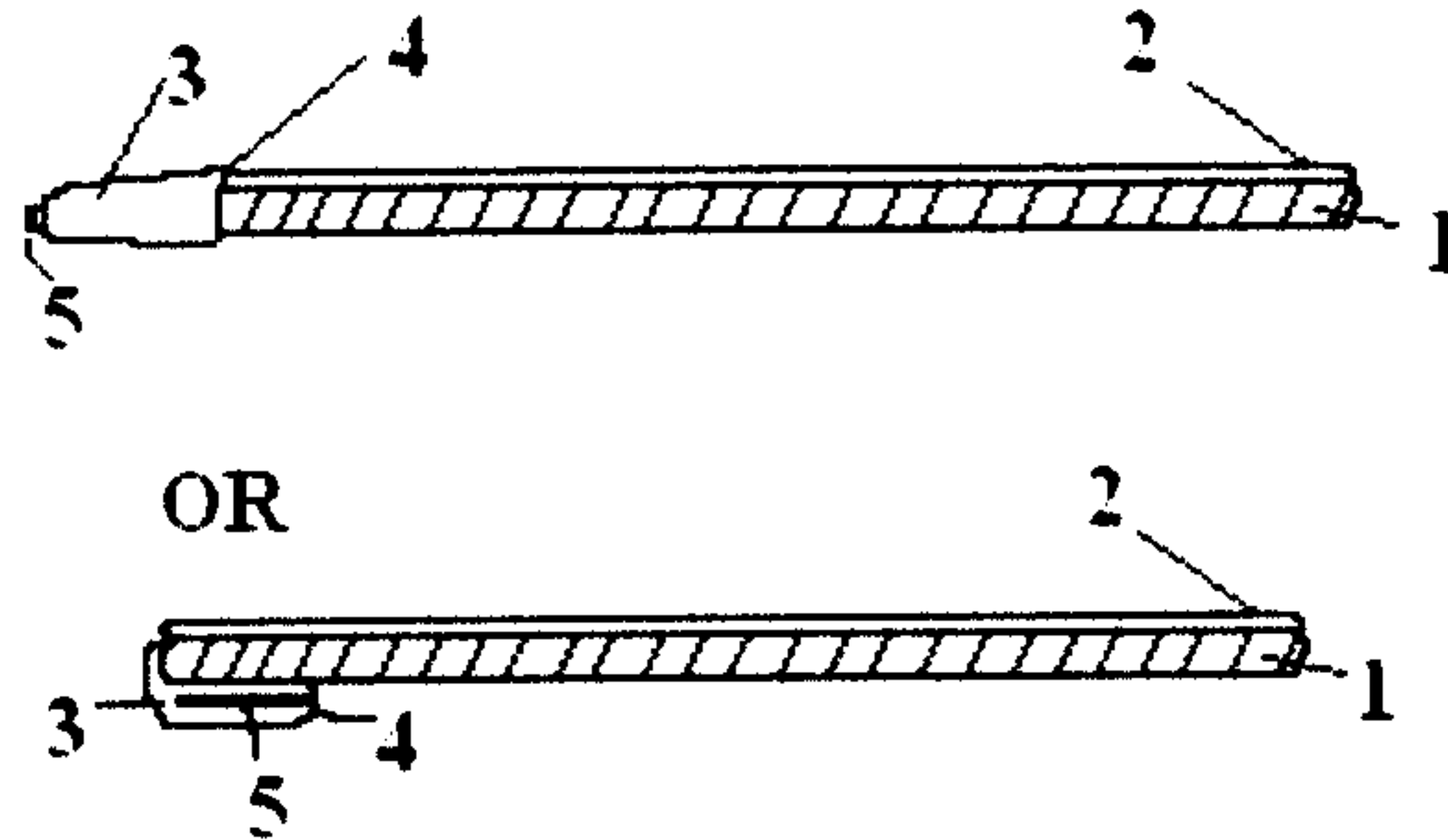


Figure 1
Longitudinal Cross-Sectional View
(Storage Pocket Position Variations Shown)

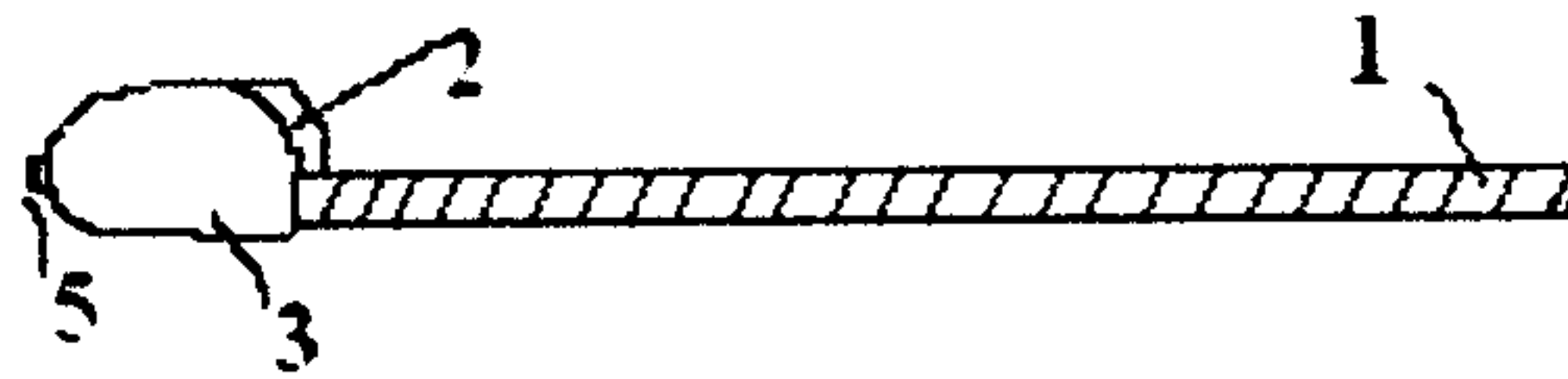


Figure 2
Longitudinal (Blanket Stored) View

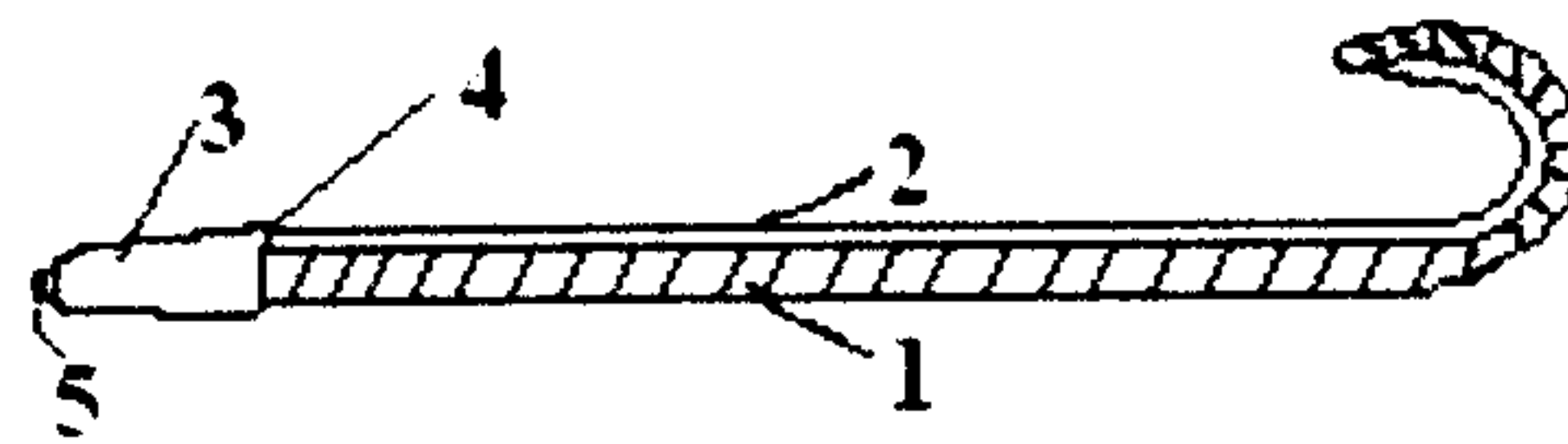


Figure 3
Longitudinal (Rolling) View

Drawings (continued)

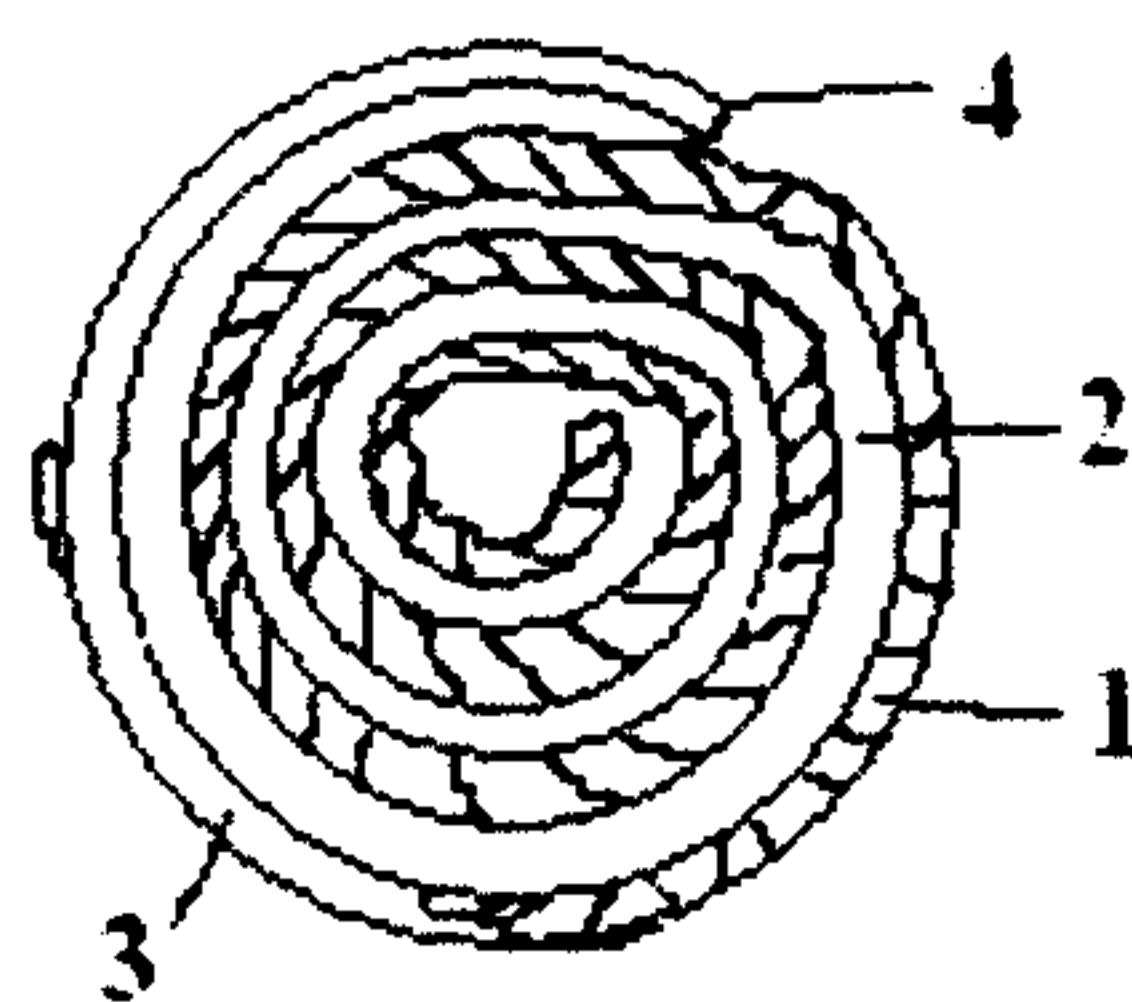


Figure 4
Cross Section (Rolled Up) Side View

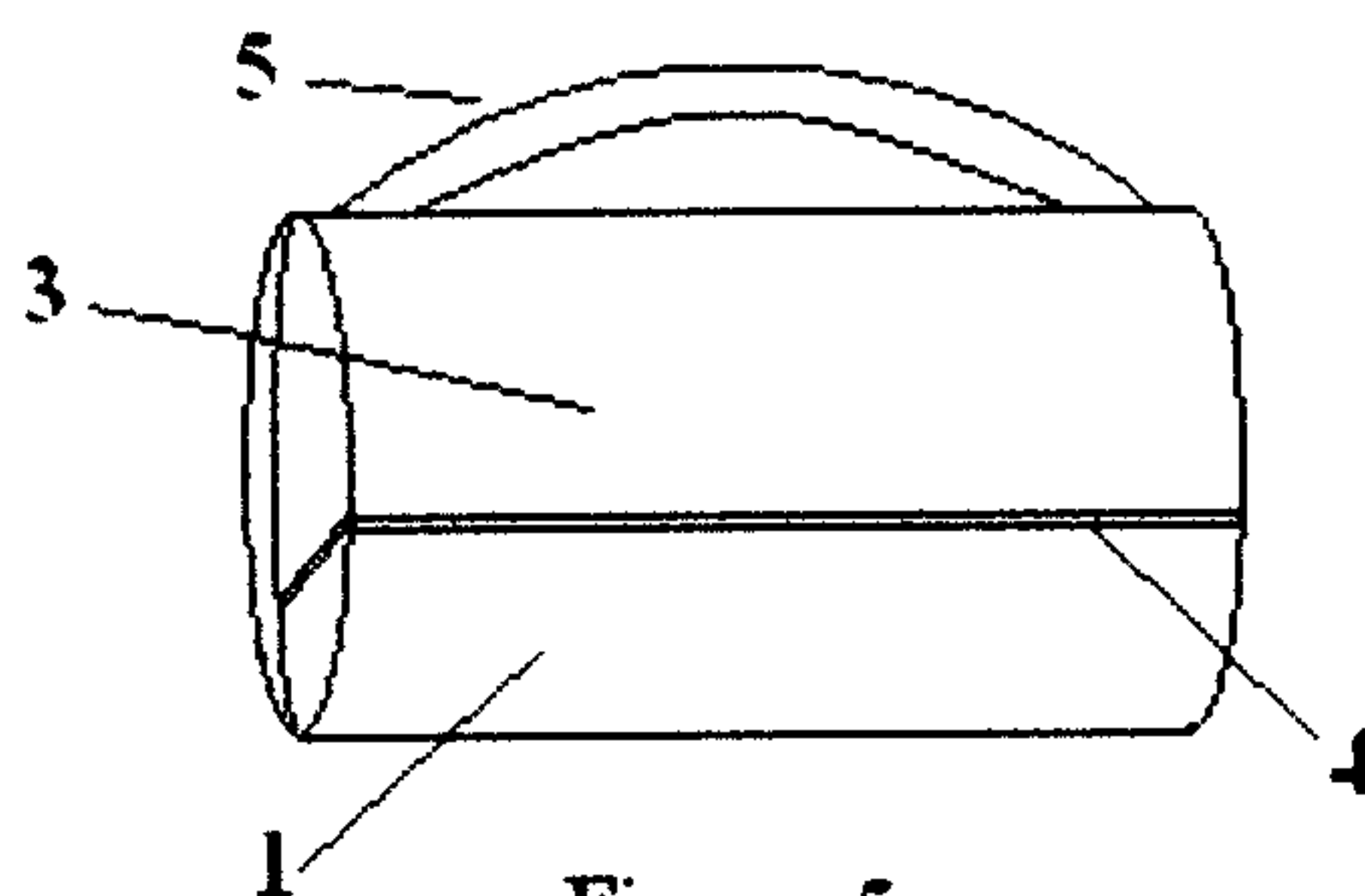


Figure 5
Rolled Up View

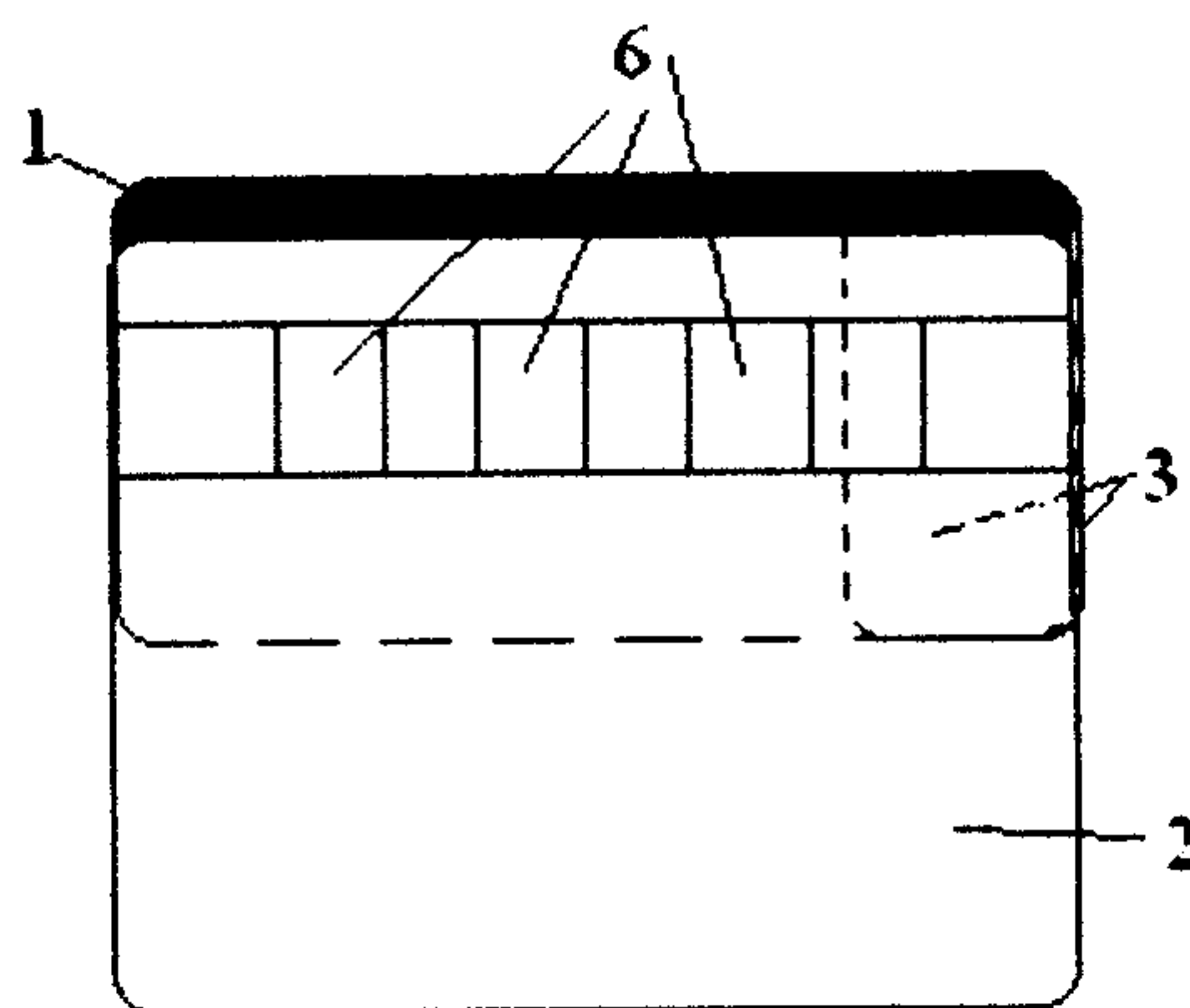


Figure 6
Top View (Rolled Out)

Drawings (continued)

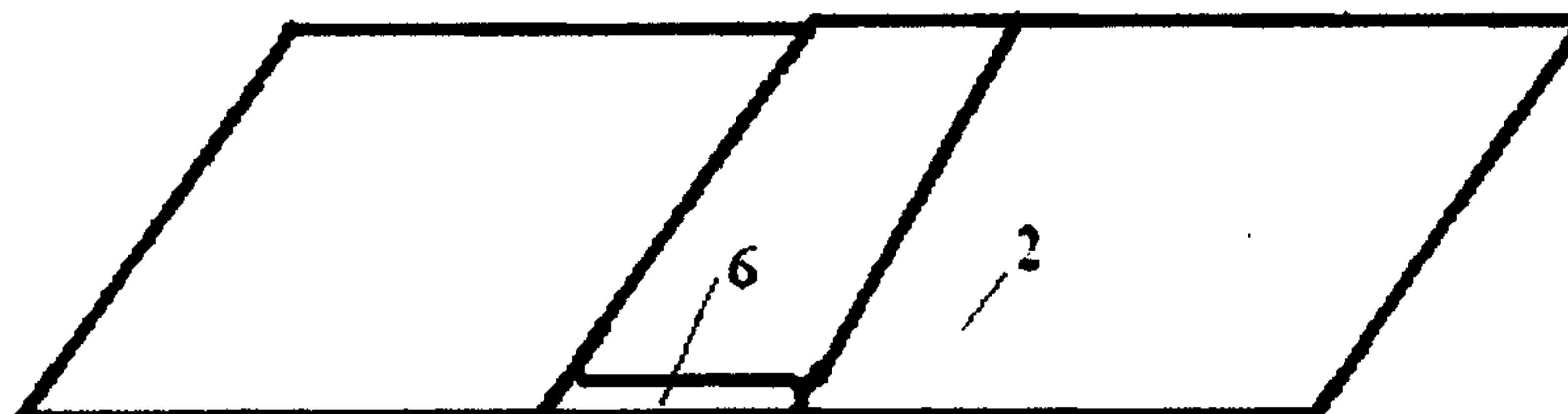


Figure 7
Longitudinal Cross Section of Blanket Pocket Fold

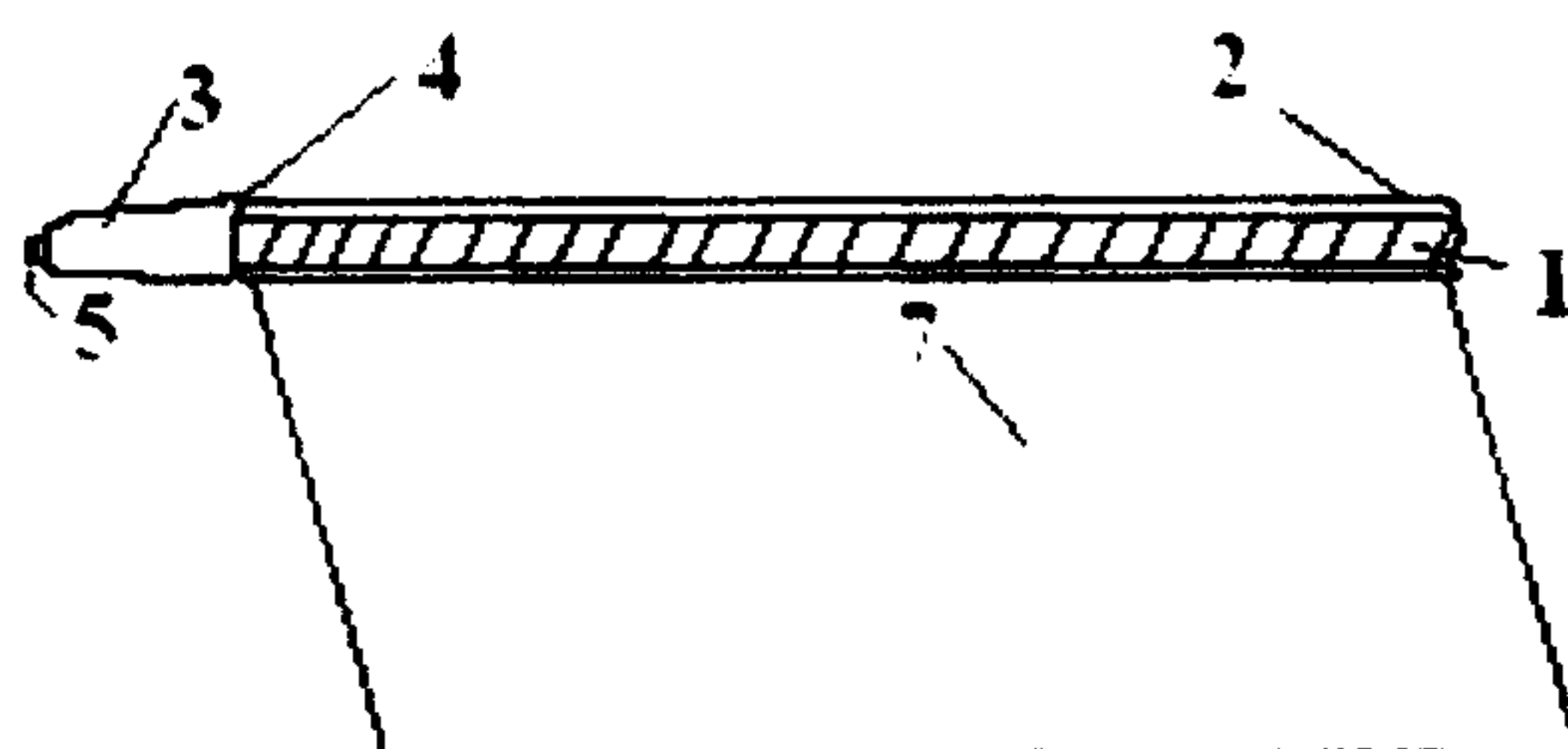


Figure 8A
Longitudinal (Additional Layer(s)) View

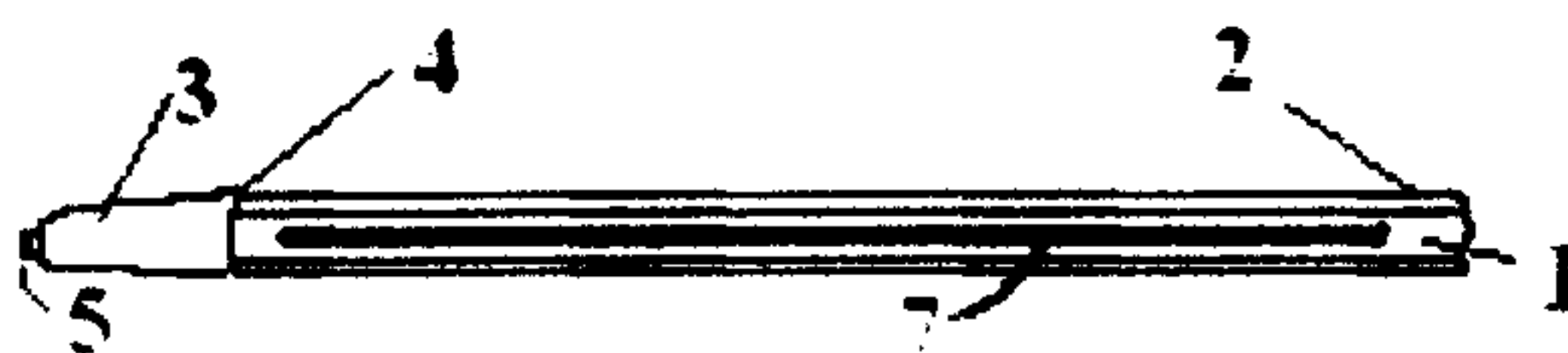


Figure 8B
Longitudinal (Additional Layer(s) Stowed) View

Drawings (continued)

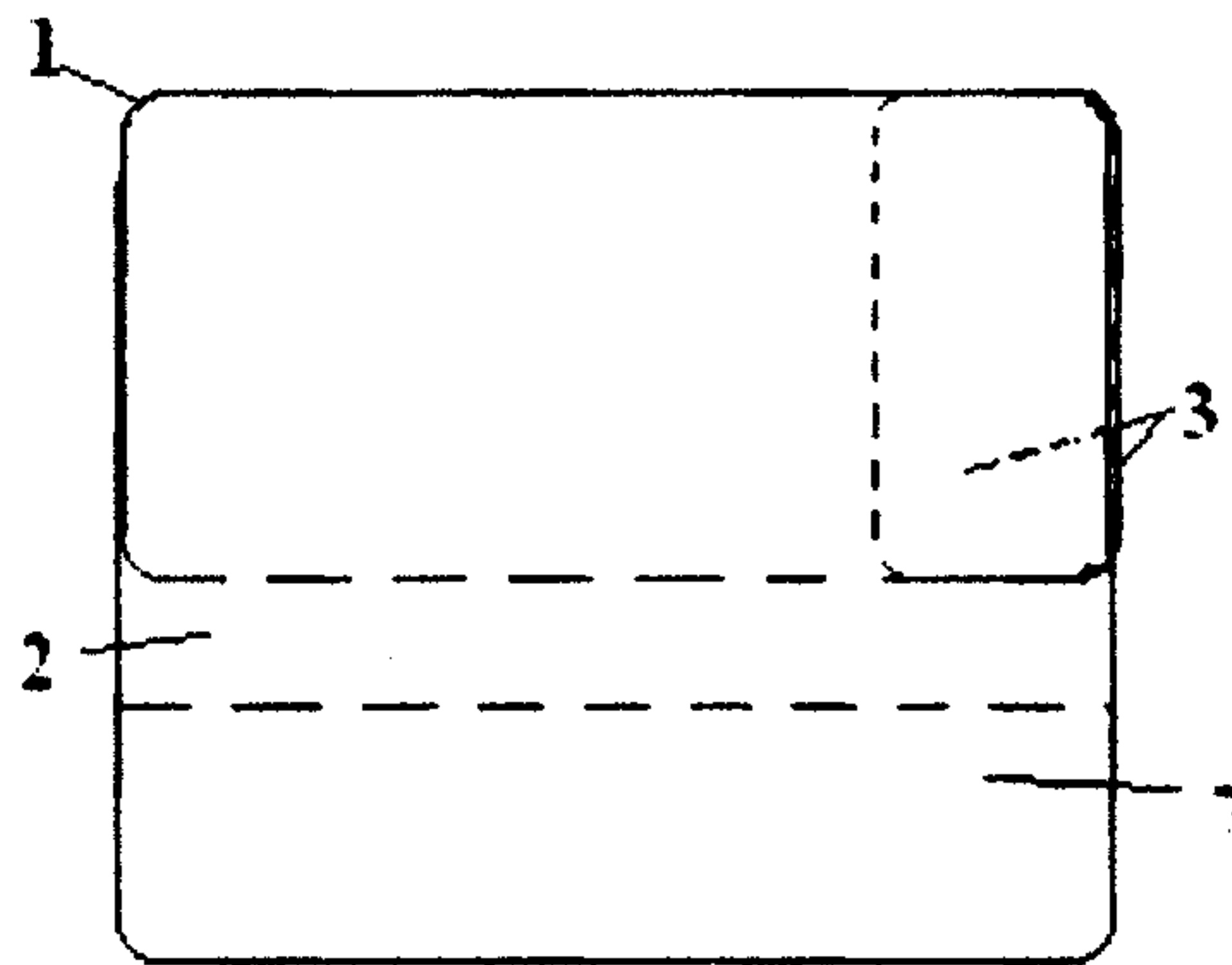


Figure 8C
Bottom View (Embodiments of Figure 8A and 8B)

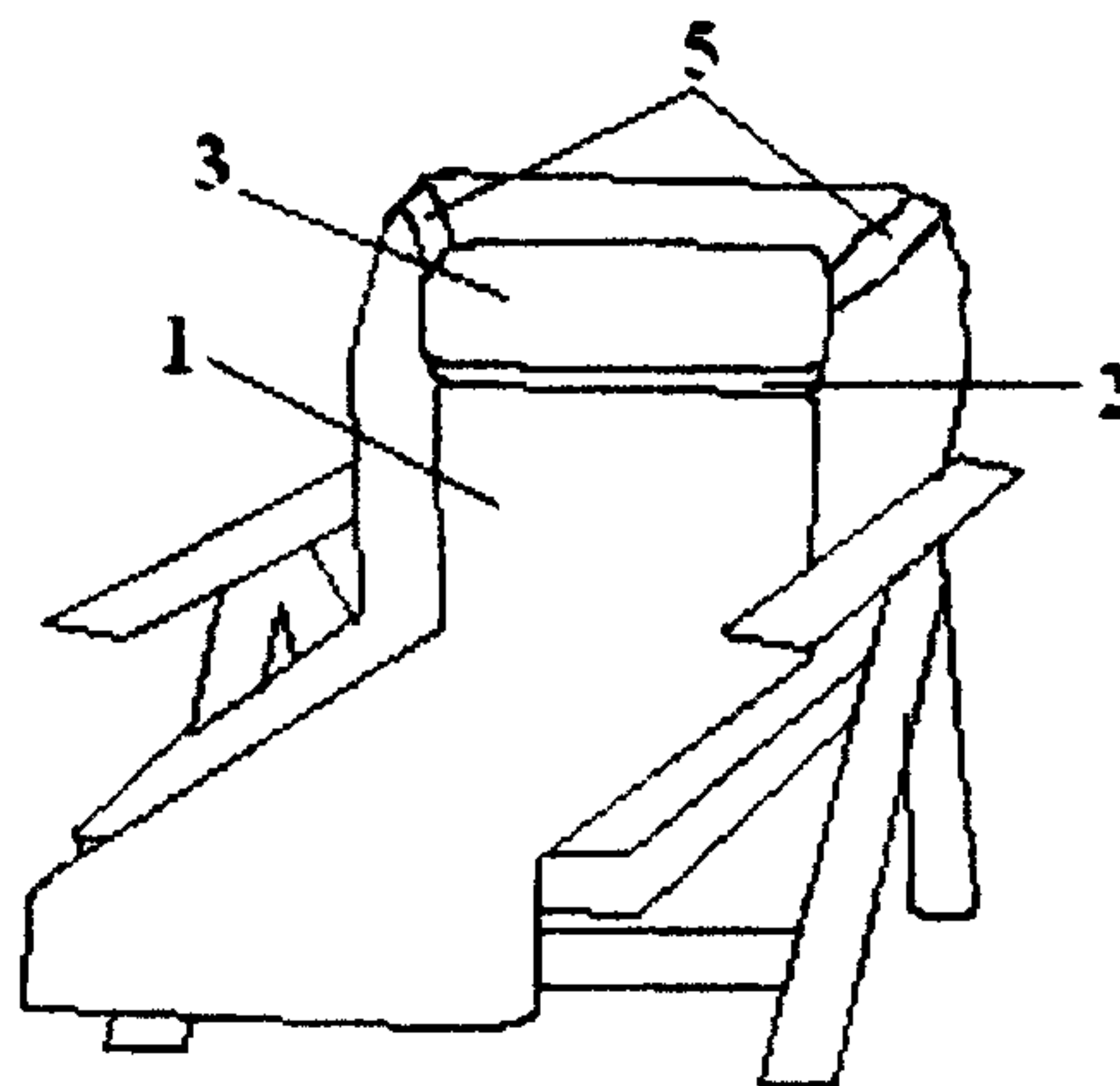
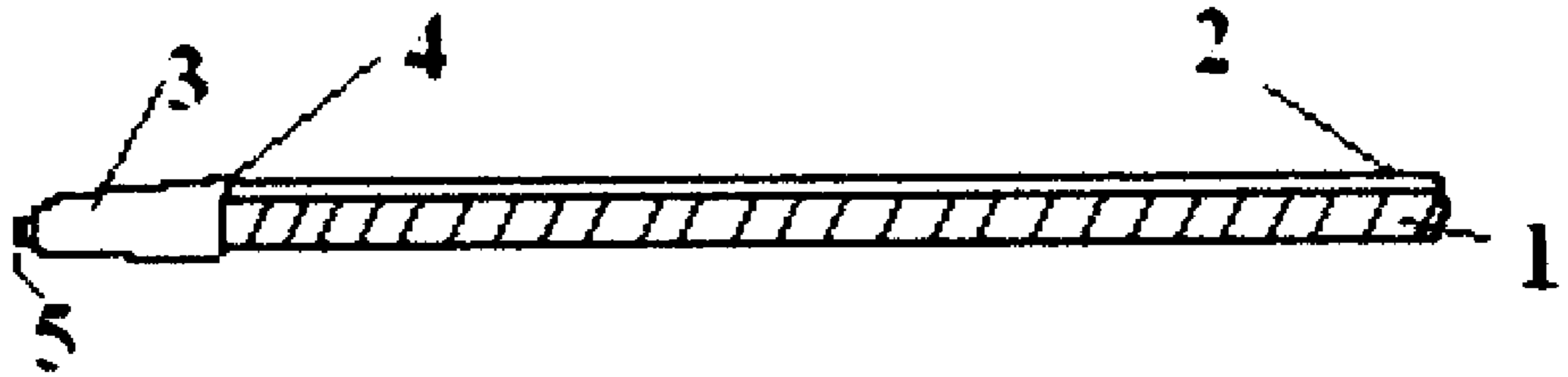
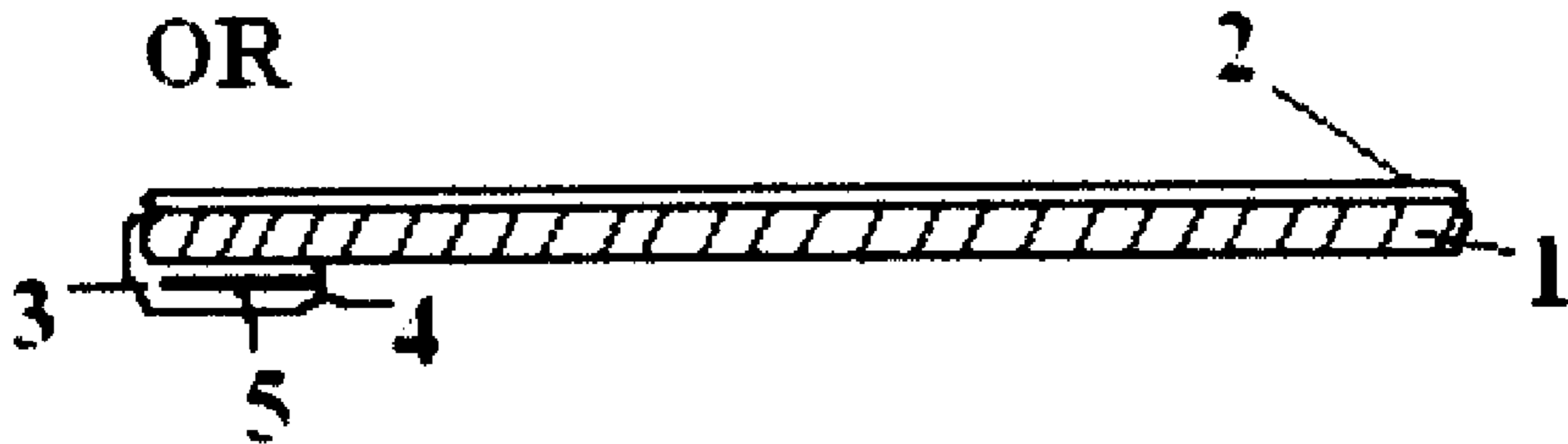


Figure 9
In Use On Chair With Blanket Stored View



OR



**Longitudinal Cross-Sectional View
(Storage Pocket Position Variations Shown)**