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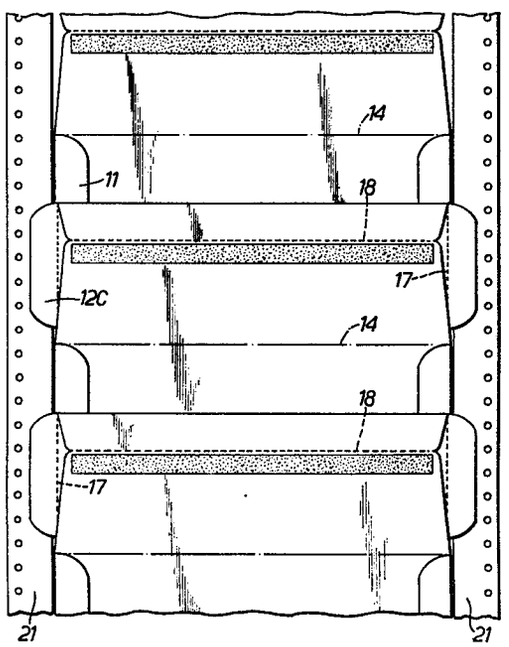
(54) Continuous stationery.

(57) A series of envelopes of generally conventional form are secured to tractor strips (21) by auxiliary flaps (12C) which are integral with the envelopes but readily detachable by tearing off along lines of weakness (17), such as perforations.



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Continuous Stationery

This invention relates to continuous stationery in the form of a series of interconnected envelopes.

More particularly, the invention relates to such a series of envelopes provided with tractor strips at opposite longitudinal edges of the series to facilitate automated printing of the envelopes, for example in a printer controlled by a word processor.

There have been many proposals published for such stationery, but for the most part they tend to be of somewhat complex construction and the envelopes have their front and rear panels stuck together face-to-face as two plies, which is not pleasing aesthetically and results in the envelopes being less robust than conventional envelopes.

Some prior art proposals have provided such continuous stationery in which the envelopes are of a generally conventional form but have left some problems unresolved.

For example, in British Patent 1268122, portions of the tractor strips are left adhering to the envelopes after separation, which is aesthetically unsatisfactory,

and in British Patent 439352, the envelopes are in some cases perforated themselves, which is unsightly, and in another the tractor strips are stuck to the envelopes and subsequently peeled off. This latter construction presents something of a conflict. On the one hand, the strips must be adhered to the envelopes sufficiently strongly to withstand the forces experienced in passage of the series through a printing machine. On the other hand, the adhesion should be light enough to facilitate the strips being peeled off the envelopes without stripping the surface. Also, there is a substantial risk of some adhesive remaining on the envelopes, encouraging them to pick up unsightly dirt.

Finally, in British Patent 1151717, a series of envelopes is formed each with sections of tractor strip formed integral therewith, the individual envelopes being assembled together to form the series by partial superimposition of the individual length of tractor strip and securing them together. This has disadvantages in that great care is required in assembling the strips together so as to ensure that a constant pitch between the holes is maintained. Also, the tractor strip must be the same grade paper as the envelopes, rather than being chosen for its specific tractor function.

The present invention aims at reducing or obviating the above described problems, and is mainly characterised by the fact that the individual envelopes are each provided with integral auxiliary flaps which are secured to the respective tractor strips and are readily detachable from the envelope to detach the envelope from the strips.

With this arrangement, the series can be of relatively simple construction, and the individual envelopes may have a largely conventional construction, e.g. with the front and rear panels of each envelope

having folded-in flaps on one panel to which the other panel is secured. At the same time, the envelopes are not marred by residual traces of exposed adhesive, nor by having portions of tractor strip adhering to them.

In order that the invention may be more fully understood, two embodiments thereof are described below, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is a rear view of a completed envelope after separation from a series;

Figure 2 is a front view of a continuous blank from which the envelope of Figure 1 is made;

Figures 3 and 4 are front and rear views respectively, showing different stages in forming the series of envelopes;

Figure 5 is a view of a blank for a second form of envelope series in accordance with the invention;

Figure 6 is a view of part of the series formed from the blanks of Figure 5.

Figure 1 shows a finished envelope from the rear, ready to receive its intended contents.

The envelope is of integral construction and comprises a front panel 10, having opposite side flaps 11 over which a rear panel 12 is adhesively secured. The envelope has a top flap 13 with a latexed area 13A and the rear panel has a corresponding latexed area 12A. A fold line or crease 14 delineates the top flap 13 from front panel 10, and another crease 16 is formed in the rear panel to define a rear panel margin 12B which is free of the side flaps 11.

The envelope seen in Figure 1 is one of many formed from a continuous blank illustrated in Figure 2, in which the blank is viewed from the front, i.e. in which the front face of the front panel is visible.

In addition to the panels and flaps described in relation to Figure 1, it will be seen that auxiliary flaps 12C are formed integrally with the rear panel 12, being delineated by lines of perforation 17. Figure 2 also shows areas 11A destined to be gummed to secure the rear panel in place, and transverse lines of perforations 18 by which adjacent blanks are interconnected, as indicated at (12B) and (13).

The cut continuous blank is then partially folded by turning down the side flaps 11, and turning down about fold line 19 the back panel 12 which is there secured by gum placed on the areas 11A. The panel margin 12B is then folded back at fold line 16 to overlie the adjacent latexed area 12A. This partially folded condition is seen from the front in Figure 3.

Next, tractor strips 21 are adhesively secured to the projecting auxiliary flaps to complete the series, as shown in Figure 4 which is a view from the rear of the envelopes. The series is then formed into a concertina, or zig-zag stack by folding about fold lines 14 in alternate directions and is now ready for use in a serial printer controlled, for example, by a word processor.

Individual envelopes are separated from each other by tearing off the auxiliary flaps 12C and by tearing along the perforated lines 18 to separate the marginal panel 12B of one envelope from the top flap 13 of the next following envelope.

As will be appreciated from Figure 1, the envelopes thus formed are of generally conventional appearance especially as viewed from the front. At the rear, the edges of the rear panel 12 which carried the auxiliary flaps are set in slightly from the side edges of the front panel 10, and are accordingly not evident from the front.

Apart from the envelopes looking like

conventional envelopes, they have a similar degree of robustness which suits their use with machinery for stuffing them with documents. Furthermore, stuffing can be effected before or after the individual envelopes are separated from each other.

In the second embodiment of the invention, the series of envelopes is formed from identical blanks, one of which is shown in Figure 5, in which the rear surface of the front panel 10 is visible. Integral with the front panel are side flaps 11 and a bottom flap 10A having areas 11A and 10B, respectively, on their front surfaces, on which gum will be spread prior to assembly. Separated from the top edge of front panel 10 by a fold line 14 is a top flap 13 having a latexed area 13A and a fold line 13B.

A rear panel 12 is connected to the edge of top flap 13 along a perforated line 18, and has auxiliary side flaps 12C connected to it by perforated lines 17. A rear panel margin 12B carries a latexed area 12A and is delineated from the rear panel by an optional fold line 16.

The front and rear panels 10 and 12 of each blank are destined to form corresponding panels of respective adjacent envelopes in the series.

In a first stage of forming the flaps 11 and 10A are folded upwardly and inwardly and the rear panel 12 of the next succeeding blank is secured to those flaps by gumming the appropriate areas, this condition being illustrated in Figure 6 which shows the two blanks, from the rear. Of course, the lower panel 10 will have the rear panel 12 of a succeeding blank superposed on it, and so on.

Next tractor strips 21 are secured to the auxiliary flaps 12C as before, and finally, the assembly is folded up in zig-zag manner about fold lines 13B.

After printing and, if desired, stuffing, the envelopes are separated by tearing off the flaps 12C and tearing along the perforated lines 18.

Once again, the finished envelopes have an appearance and robustness similar to conventional envelopes.

Among the advantages of the above described construction is the fact that the tractor tapes can be of a different material from the material of which the envelope is made.

Various modifications of detail could, of course be made to the illustrated embodiments without departing from the scope of the invention. One such modification, of a very minor nature, is that reference is made above to "latexed areas". Of course, adhesives other than latex may be employed if desired, such as a gum which requires wetting to activate it. In some cases, the areas in question need not be latexed or gummed at all, for example if a stuffing machine is to be used which applies the necessary adhesive.

CLAIMS:

1. A series of envelopes comprising a plurality of envelopes, and a pair of integral continuous tractor strips at opposite longitudinal edges of the series, characterised in that the individual envelopes are each provided with integral auxiliary flaps (12C) which are secured to the respective tractor strips (21) and are readily detachable from the envelope to detach the envelope from the strips (21).

2. A series of envelopes according to claim 1, wherein each envelope comprises a back panel (12) and a front panel (10), one of said panels (10 or 12) having side flaps (11) folded in and secured to the other said panel (12 or 10), characterised in that the other said panel (12 or 10) has said auxiliary flaps (12C) formed as lateral extensions thereof and delineated therefrom by lines of weakness (17), such as perforations.

3. A series of envelopes according to claim 1 or 2, characterised in that all the envelopes in the series are formed from a single blank cut and folded prior to attachment of the strips (21) to the auxiliary flaps (12C).

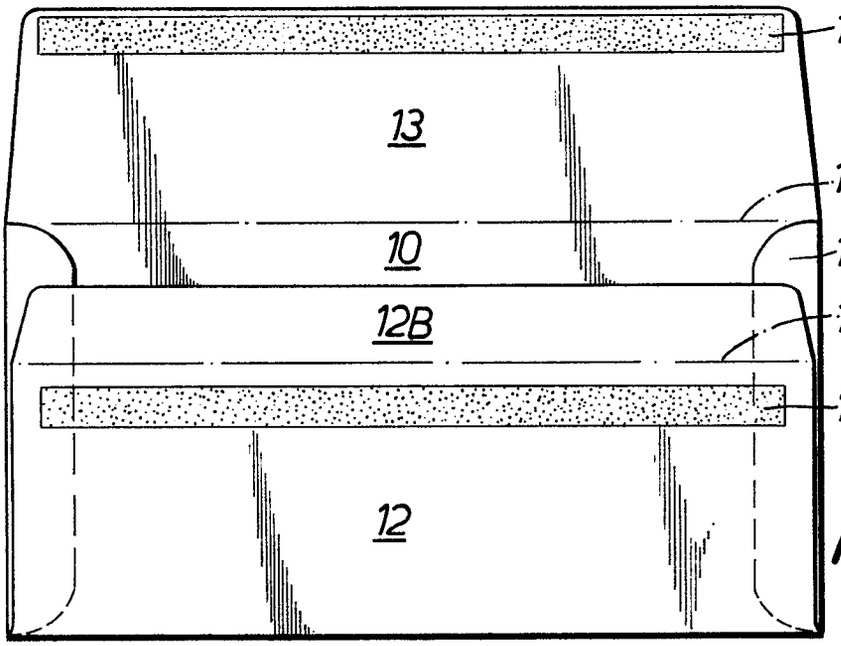
13A
13
14
10
11
12B
16
12A
12

FIG. 1.

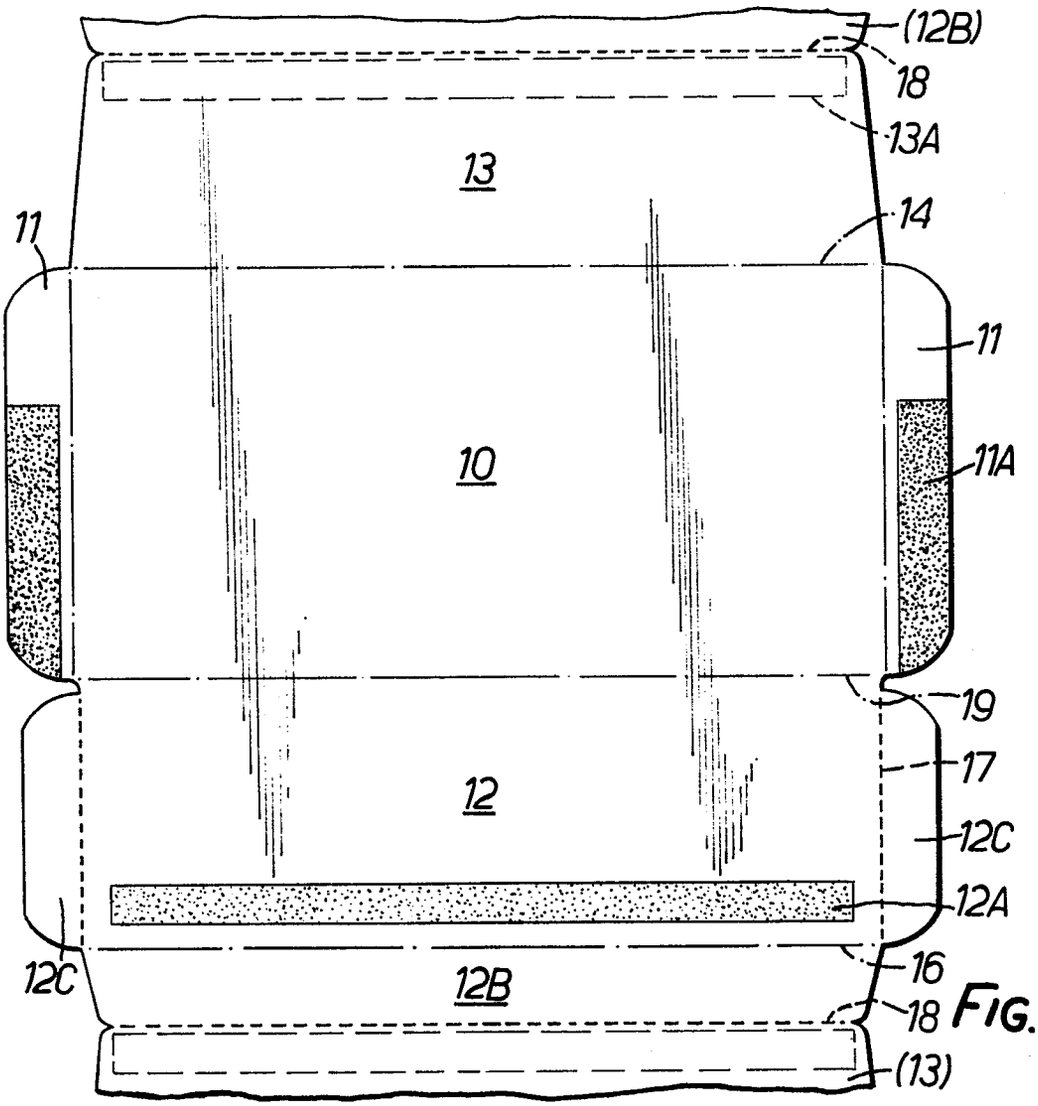
(12B)
18
13A
13
11
14
11
10
11A
19
17
12
12C
12A
16
12C
12B
18
(13)

FIG. 2.

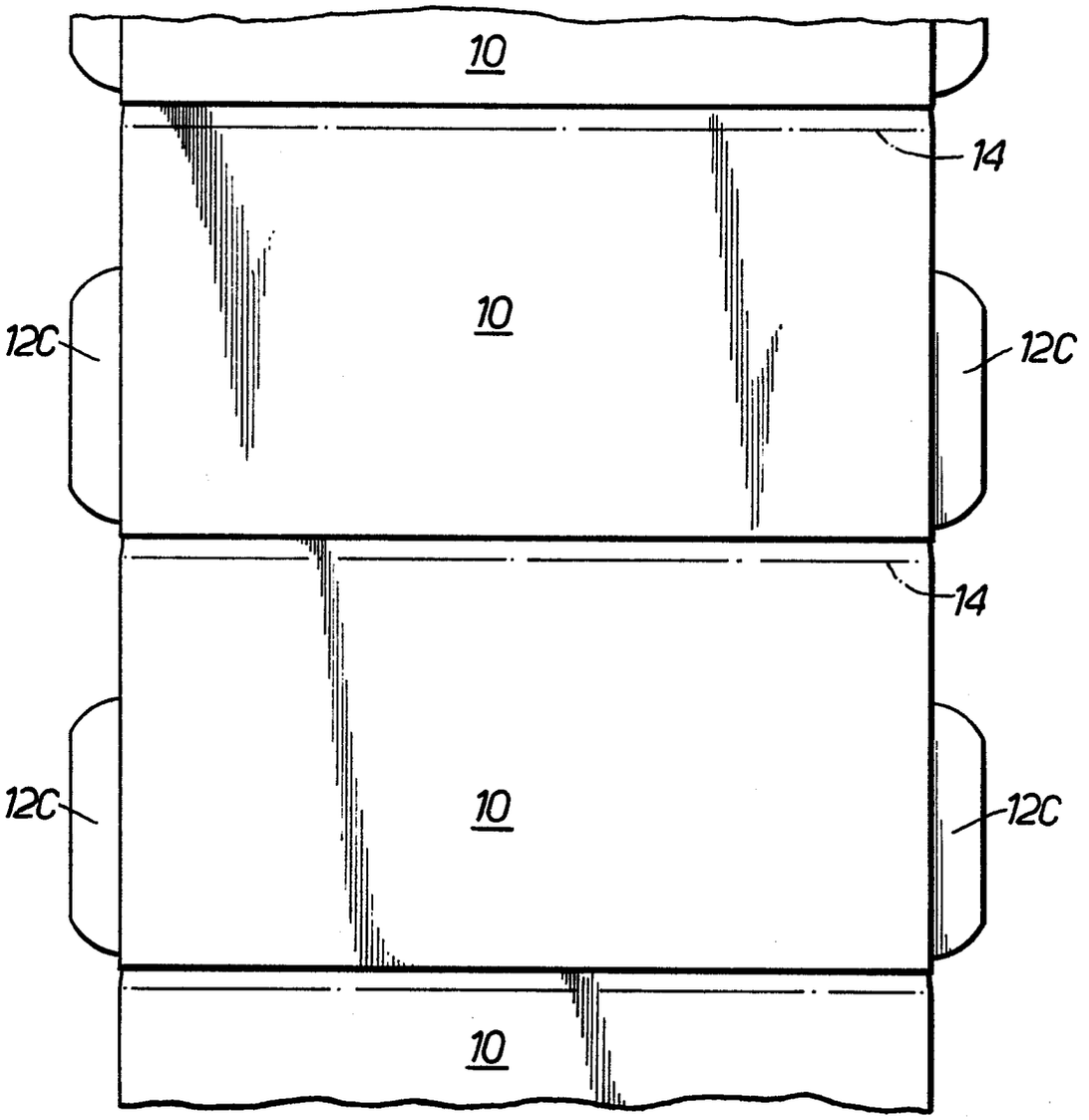

FIG. 3.

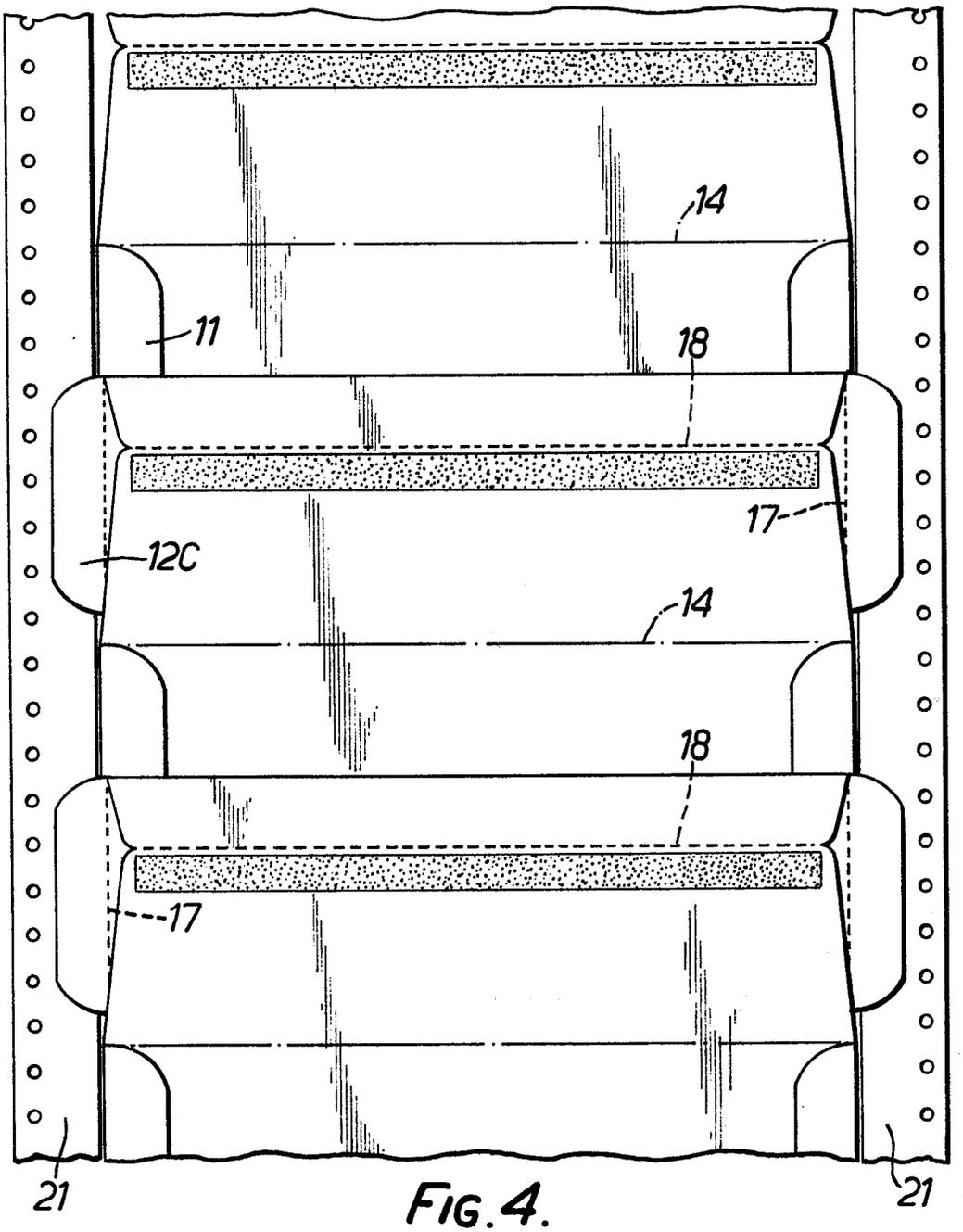

FIG. 4.

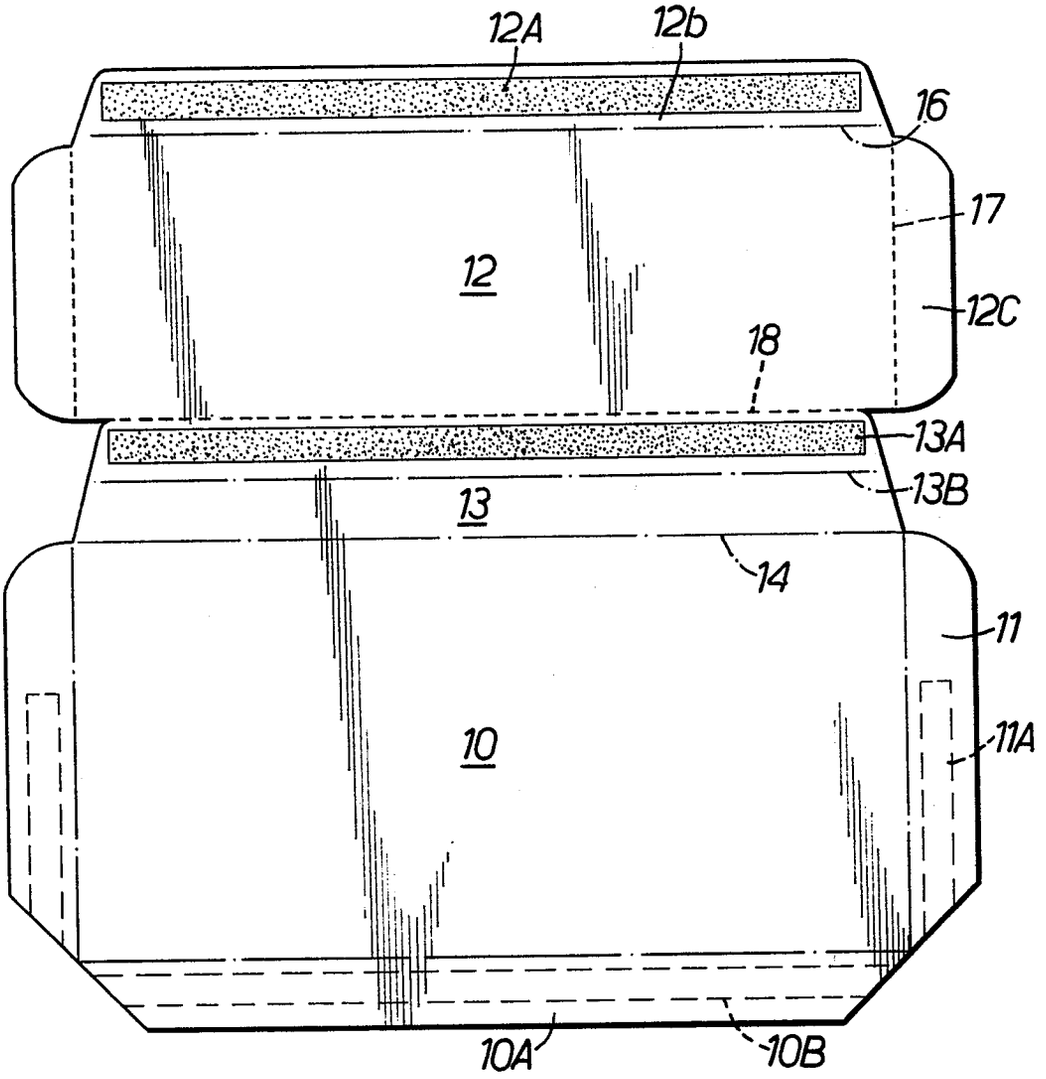

FIG. 5.

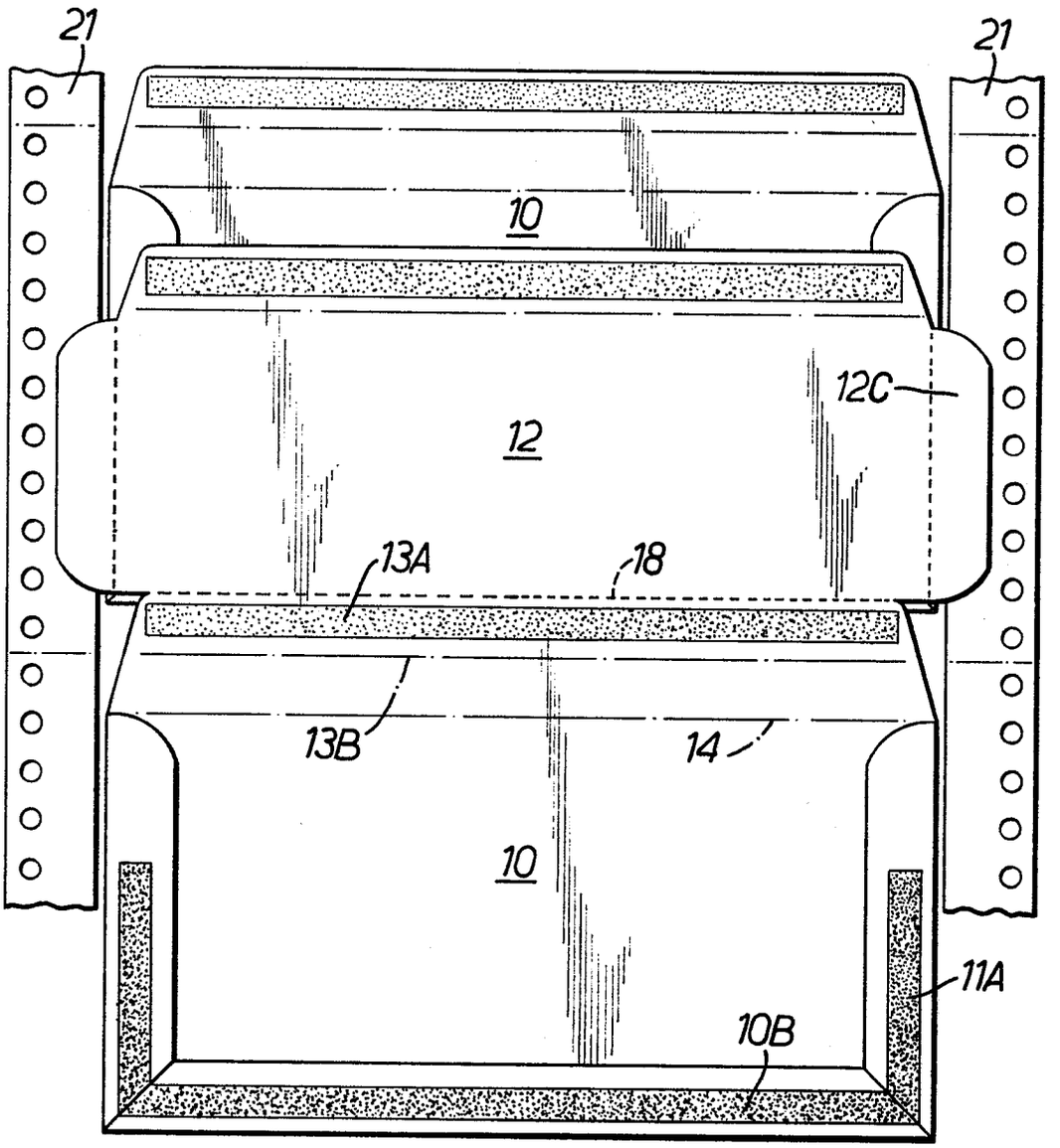

FIG.6.