

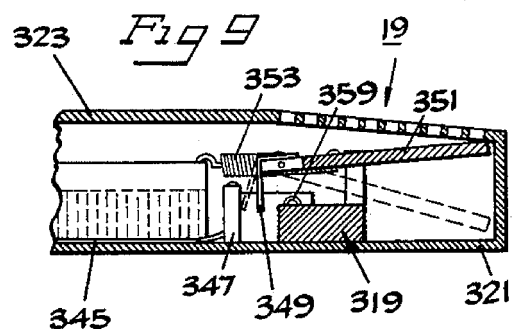


are maximizing the amount of air blowing into the mouthpiece.

Also shown here is Robot Commando's patent drawing showing the inside of the hand-held controller. As you can see from the illustration (Figure 9), there is a flat panel (#351) held up by a spring (#353). When you blow your command you are blowing the panel backwards so the bottom of the panel (#349) makes electrical contact at #347. This electrical contact, by blowing the panel back, then starts the motor. Blowing activates it.

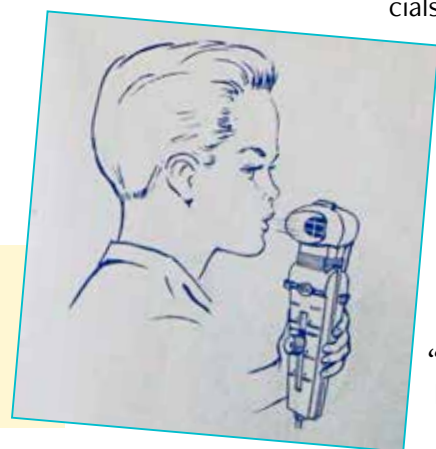
The toy, instruction sheet, and patent all show how it works with breath and blowing, but the TV commercial advertises the toy in a very different way. The Robot Commando commercial was impressive for its time. It pushed the boundaries for dramatic effect but may have gone a little too far. Here are some key frames from the nationwide commercial that was pulled from the market after just two months.

On Sept 12, 1962, a complaint was filed to the Federal Trade Commission against the Ideal Toy Corporation. The complaint alleged Ideal was, "... engaging in false, misleading, and deceptive repre-



ABOVE The Robot Commando patent illustration showing the inside of the controller and mouthpiece flap.

RIGHT An illustration from the instruction sheet showing a kid blowing into the controller mouthpiece.



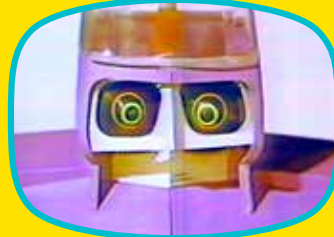
1 The overly dramatic TV commercial announcer exclaimed, "Ideal's Robot Commando is here to help you!"

2 "He's your one man army."

3 "He takes orders from no one except you. Adjust the control."

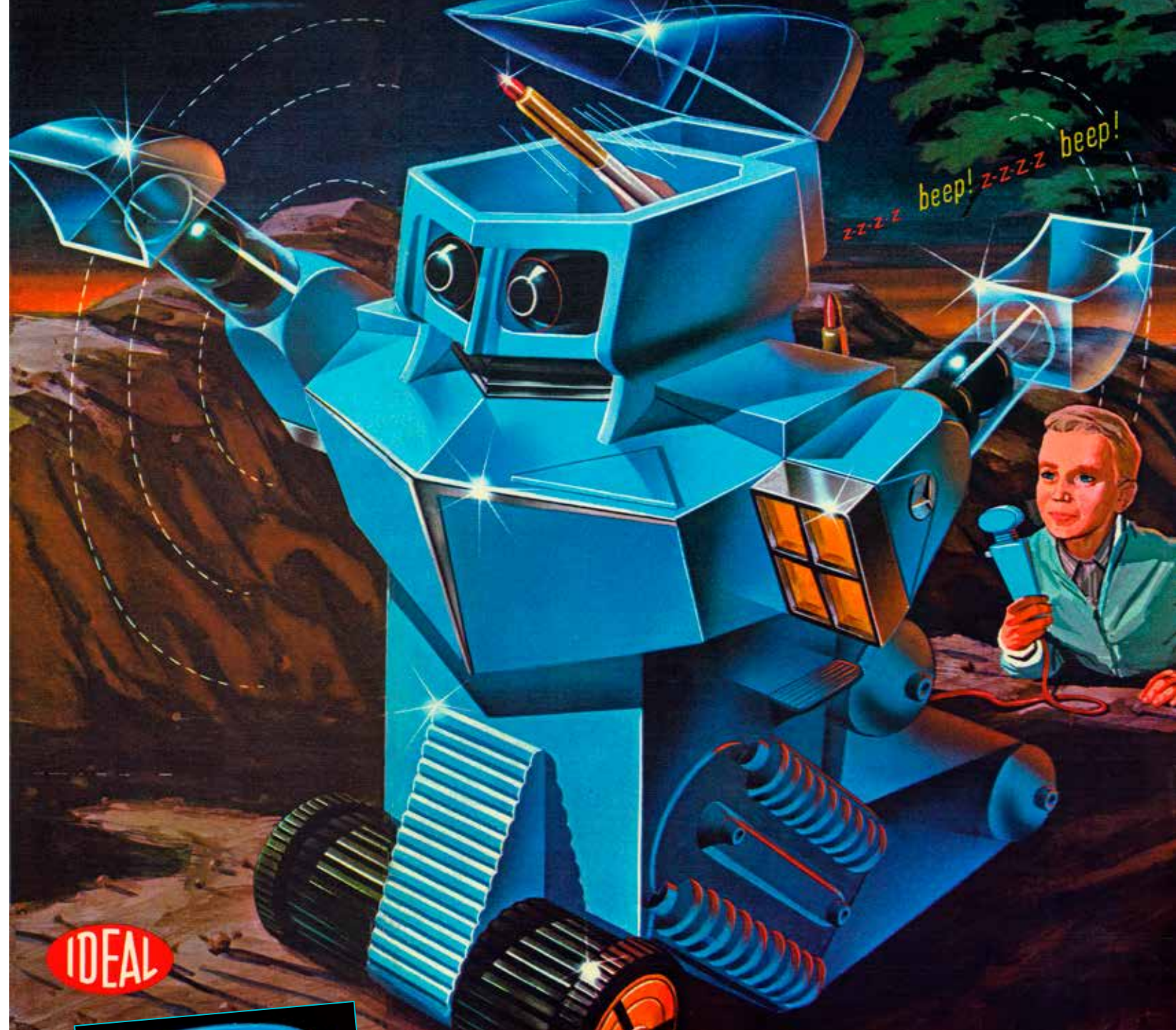
4 "Speak into the microphone. FIRE!"

5 "Look for your Robot Commando. He's looking for you!"



sentation in its television advertising,"<sup>39</sup> which was a violation of the Federal Trade Commission Act, Section 5. The lawsuit was about two Ideal commercials, Robot Commando and the

Thumbelina doll. Robot Commando is described in the lawsuit as, "a strangely grotesque mechanical man." The lawsuit concerning the Robot Commando commercial contained three complaints, (1) that the toy was advertised to activate "vocally, that is to say, merely by use of voice." It went on to



ABOVE The words "blow sharply," were added to the controller after the first production run.

state, "The sound of the voice, unless accompanied by the action of blowing into the microphone, will not commence the toy's action." The second complaint was that the toy was shown moving on its own, but batteries were actually needed for it

to move. The third charge was not disclosing the batteries needed to be purchased separately. On January twenty, 1964, a decision was made against Ideal. In the decision it stated the commercial aired from about September 16, 1961 until it was pulled by Ideal about November 20, 1961, "at which time there was a change." The hearing examiner stated in his decision against Ideal that, he was "... of the opinion, and therefore finds, that the television script and picture definitely gave the viewer the impression that only the child's voice command is necessary to cause the toy to perform