March 15, 1966 J. H. FOX 3,240,378

CARRYING CASE FOR BOTTLES AND DIVIDER STRUCTURE THEREFOR

Filed April 19, 1962 4 Sheets-Sheet 1

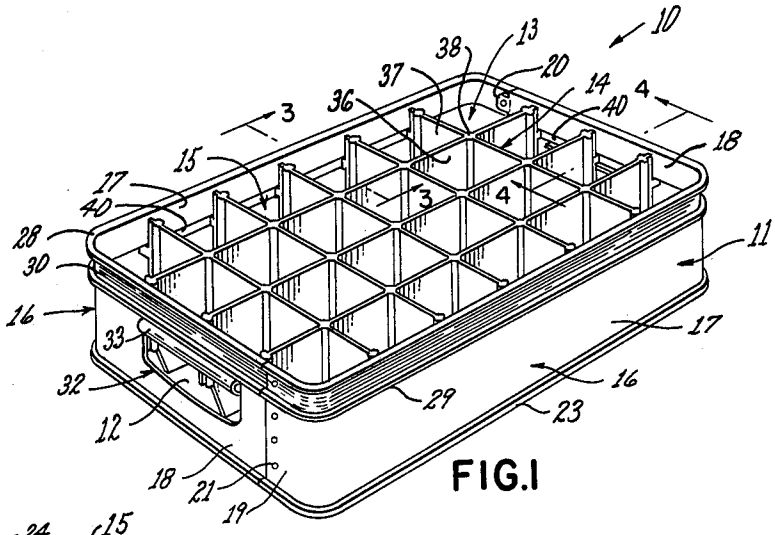


FIG.1

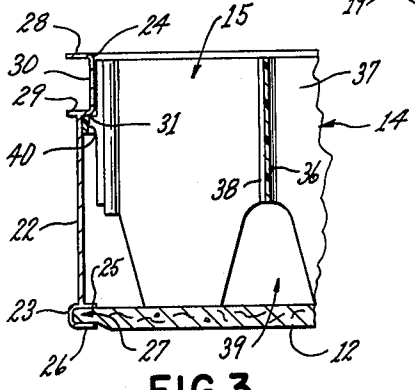


FIG.3

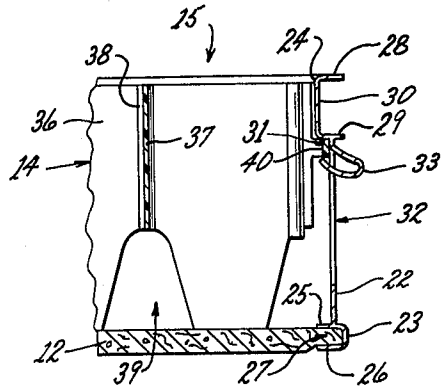


FIG.4

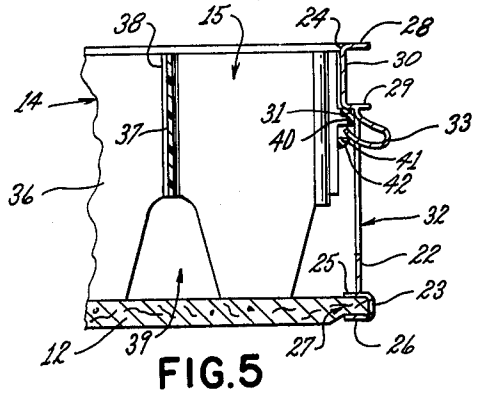


FIG.5

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CARRYING CASE FOR BOTTLES AND DIVIDER STRUCTURE THEREFOR

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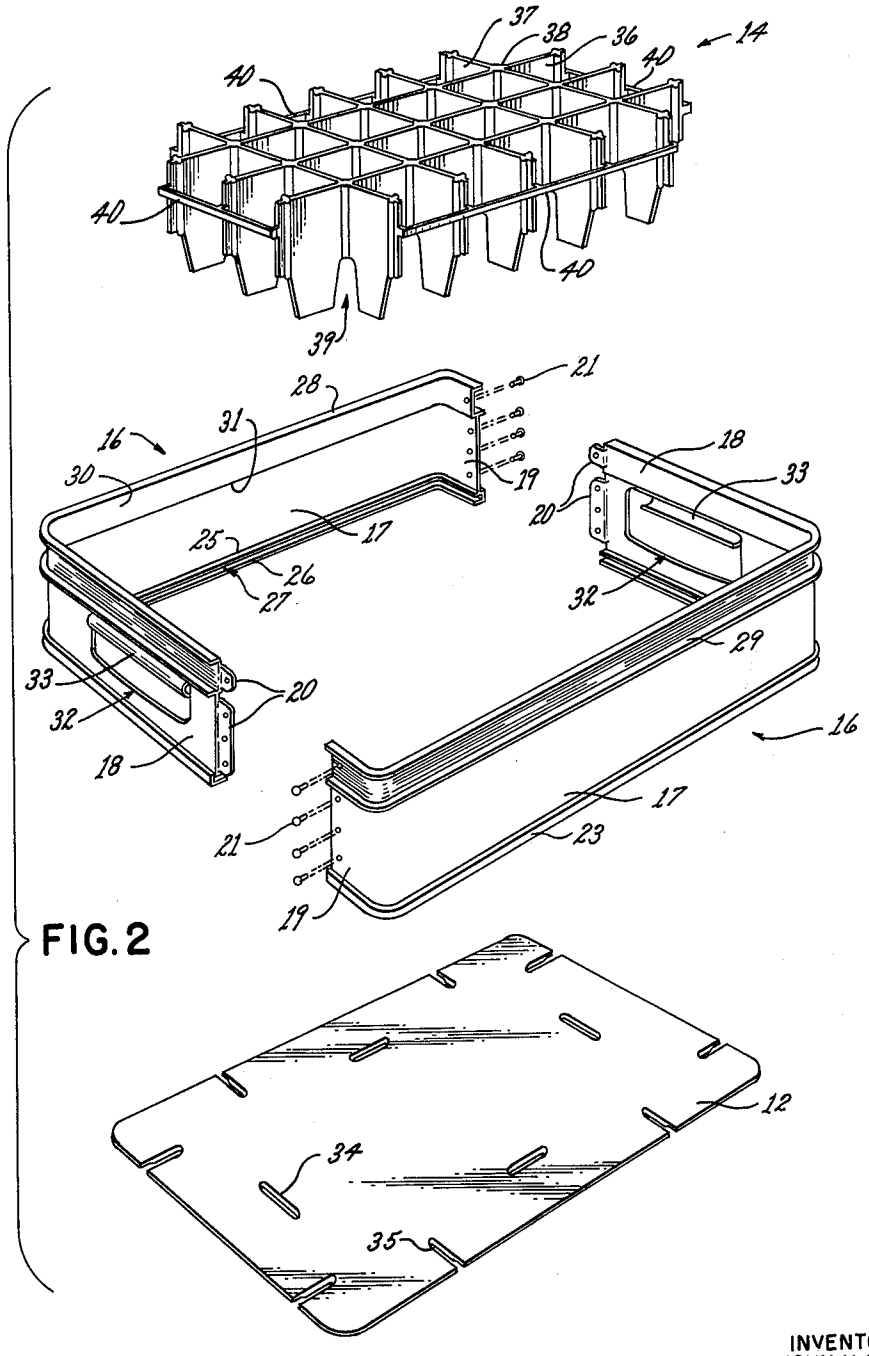


FIG. 2

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CARRYING CASE FOR BOTTLES AND DIVIDER STRUCTURE THEREFOR

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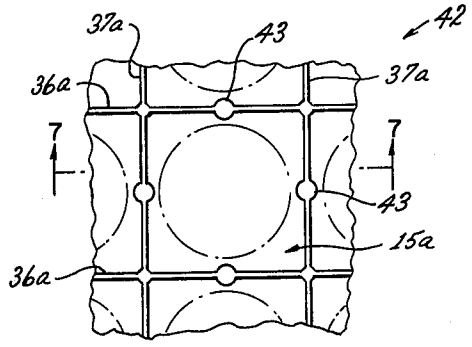


FIG.6

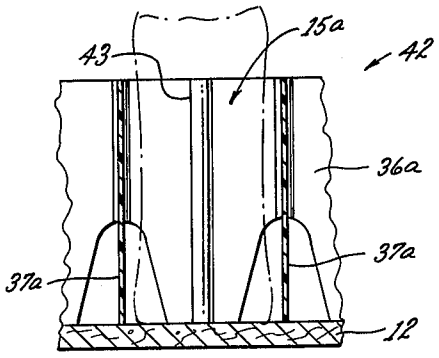


FIG.7

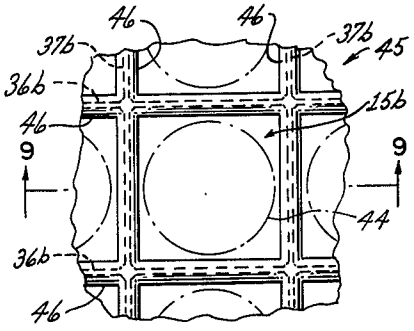


FIG.8

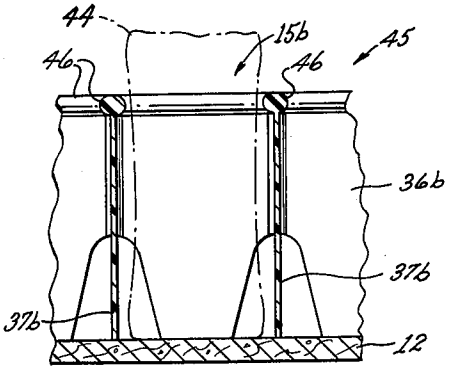


FIG.9

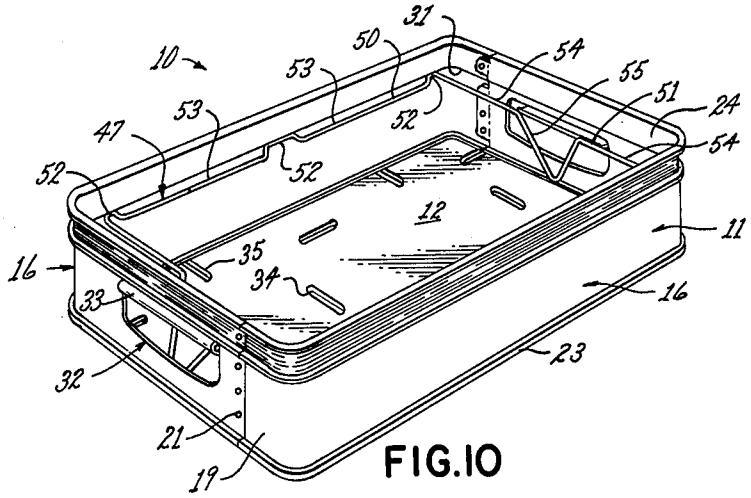


FIG.10

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CARRYING CASE FOR BOTTLES AND DIVIDER STRUCTURE THEREFOR

Filed April 19, 1962 4 Sheets-Sheet 4

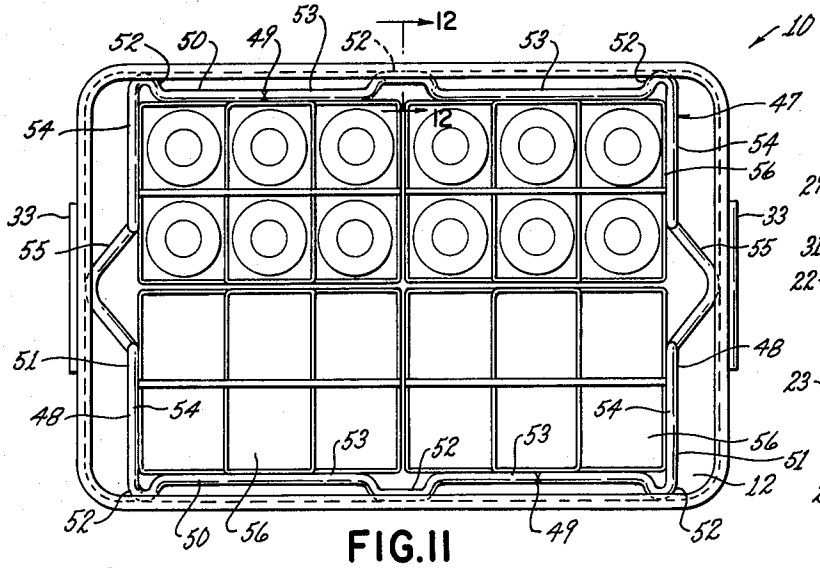


FIG.11

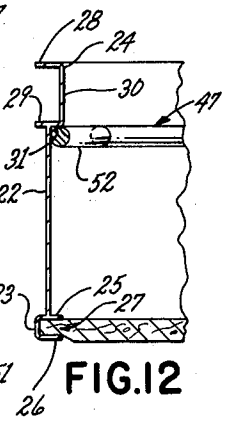


FIG.12

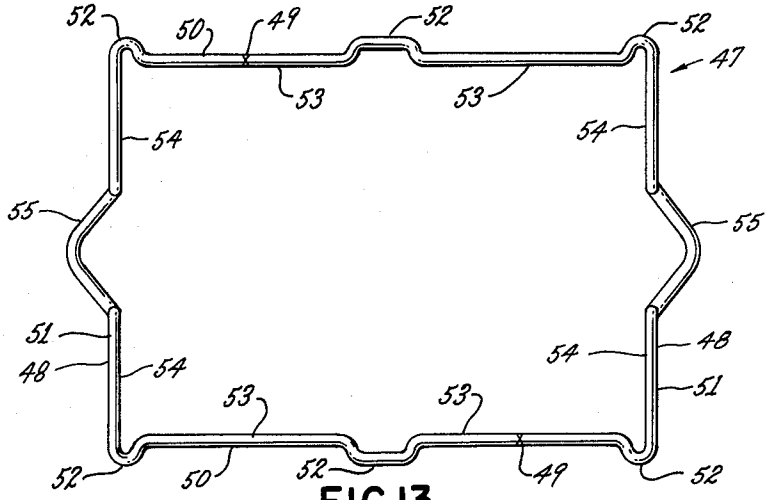


FIG.13

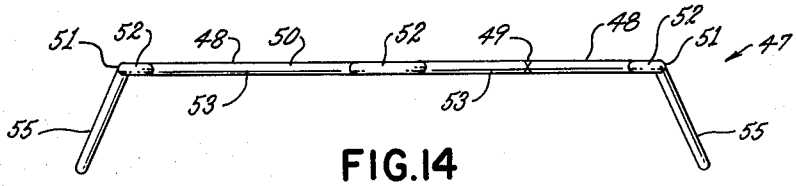


FIG.14

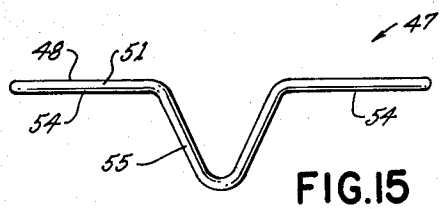


FIG.15

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3,240,378

CARRYING CASE FOR BOTTLES AND DIVIDER STRUCTURE THEREFOR

John H. Fox, Chesterfield County, Va., assignor to Reynolds Metals Company, Richmond, Va., a corporation of Delaware

Filed Apr. 19, 1962, Ser. No. 188,755
1 Claim. (Cl. 220—21)

This invention relates to an improved carrying case for bottles and the like as well as to improved divider structures and parts for such a carrying case or the like.

Heretofore, many attempts have been made to provide a carrying case for bottles and the like wherein the carrying case is long lasting, durable, and attractive in design.

However, when such carrying cases are made from wood and the like, the wooden carrying cases rapidly deteriorate during continued use thereof whereby high maintenance costs are encountered to maintain the cases in attractive appearance.

Therefore, various attempts have been made to produce such carrying cases from aluminum-containing metallic material or the like wherein the major structure of the carrying case is formed from such metallic material so that the carrying case will be durable, long lasting, and atractive in appearance without excessive maintenance costs.

Such prior known aluminum-containing metallic material carrying cases have rather complicated divider structure which tends to increase the cost of manufacturing such cases not only because of the cost of producing the divider structure but also because of the cost of assembling the divider structure in the carrying case.

According to the teachings of this invention, however, an improved carrying case is provided having the above advantages of the prior known metallic carrying cases and the like and having the further advantages of having a unique divider structure which is simple and inexpensive to manufacture and can be assembled into the carrying case in a relatively simple and non-time consuming manner.

In particular, the divider structure of this invention comprises a one-piece molded plastic structure or the like which is substantially flexible so that the same can be easily inserted in the metallic carrying case and secured thereto in a manner hereinafter shown and described without requiring time-consuming operations.

The carrying case and divider structure of this invention are so constructed and arranged that the carrying case can be utilized with one divider structure of this invention to carry bottles of a particular size, such as twenty-four twelve or sixteen ounce bottles, in individual article-receiving compartments thereof.

However, the particular carrying case can be converted to carry twenty-four six, eight or ten ounced bottles in individual article-receiving compartments thereof by readily removing the first divider structure and inserting another divider structure of this invention in the carrying case.

Further, such carrying case can be readily converted to carry four six-pack cartons of bottles by removing the divider structure and inserting an adapter of this invention in the carrying case to reduce the compartment size thereof to a size adaptable to receive the four six-pack cartons and prevent excess movement therebetween.

Accordingly, it is an object of this invention to provide an improved carrying case for bottles and the like having one or more of the novel features of this invention hereinafter set forth above or hereinafter shown or described.

Another object of this invention is to provide an improved divider structure for such a carrying case or the like.

A further object of this invention is to provide improved parts for such a carrying case or the like.

Other objects, uses, and advantages of this invention are apparent from a reading of this description which proceeds with reference to the accompanying drawings forming a part thereof and wherein:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the improved carrying case of this invention.

FIGURE 2 is an exploded perspective view illustrating the various parts of the carrying case of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 3 is an enlarged, fragmentary, cross-sectional view taken on line 3—3 of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 4 is a view similar to FIGURE 3 and is taken on line 4—4 of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 5 is a view similar to FIGURE 4 illustrating another embodiment of this invention.

FIGURE 6 is an enlarged, fragmentary top view of another divider structure of this invention.

FIGURE 7 is a fragmentary cross-sectional view taken on line 7—7 of FIGURE 6.

FIGURE 8 is a view similar to FIGURE 6 and illustrates another divider structure of this invention.

FIGURE 9 is a fragmentary cross-sectional view taken on line 9—9 of FIGURE 8.

FIGURE 10 is a perspective view of the carrying case of this invention utilizing an adapter of this invention to reduce the compartment size of the carrying case.

FIGURE 11 is a top view of the carrying case illustrated in FIGURE 10.

FIGURE 12 is a fragmentary cross-sectional view taken on line 12—12 of FIGURE 11.

FIGURE 13 is a top view of the adapter of this invention.

FIGURE 14 is a side view of the adapter of FIGURE 13.

FIGURE 15 is an end view of the adapter of FIGURE 13.

While the various features of this invention are hereinafter described and illustrated as being particularly adaptable for forming a carrying case for bottles and the like, it is to be understood that the various features of this invention can be utilized singly or in any combination thereof to provide other constructions as desired.

Therefore, this invention is not to be limited to only the embodiments illustrated in the drawings, because the drawings are merely utilized to illustrate one of the wide variety of uses of this invention.

Referring now to FIGURE 1, an improved carrying case of this invention is generally indicated by the reference numeral **10** and comprises side wall means **11** secured to a bottom wall means **12** in a manner hereinafter described to define an open ended, substantially rectangular compartment **13** receiving a divider structure **14** of this invention in such a manner that the divider structure **14** cooperates with the side wall means **11** to define a plurality of article-receiving compartments **15**, twenty-four such compartments **15** being illustrated as being the conventional number of beverage bottles provided for each carrying case **10**.

As illustrated in FIGURE 2, the side wall means **11** of the carrying case **10** is formed from a pair of like side wall members **16** formed of any suitable material and in any suitable manner.

For example, the side wall members **16** can comprise identical extrusions of aluminum-containing metallic material or the like suitably stamped and bent into the configuration illustrated in FIGURE 2 wherein each side wall member **16** has a substantially straight portion **17** forming one side wall of the carrying case **10** and inte-

grally joined to a long leg **18** and a short leg **19** at the opposed ends thereof, the long leg **18** and short leg **19** of each side member **16** cooperating respectively with the short leg **19** and long leg **18** of the other side wall member **16** to form opposed side walls of the carrying case **10** in a manner hereinafter described.

The long leg **18** of each side wall member **16** has inwardly offset tab means **20** at the free end thereof which are adapted to be disposed on the inside surface of the adjacent short leg **19** of the other side wall member **16** in the manner illustrated in FIGURE 1 whereby the side wall members **16** can be secured together by rivets **21** to provide the continuous side wall means **11** of the carrying case **10**.

As illustrated in FIGURE 3, each side wall member **16** has a cross-sectional configuration defined by a vertical web **22** having a U-shaped member **23** secured to the lower end thereof and a U-shaped member **24** secured to the upper end thereof, the lower U-shaped member **23** comprising a pair of spaced flanges **25** and **26** which define an inwardly facing channel **27** therebetween adapted to receive the bottom wall member **12** in a manner hereinafter described.

The upper U-shaped member **24** of each side wall member **16** has a pair of outwardly directed flanges **28** and **29** secured together by a vertically extending web **30** which is disposed inboard from the vertical web **22** to define a shoulder or flange means **31** in the interior of the carrying case **10** and disposed above the bottom wall member **12** for a purpose hereinafter described.

Each long leg **18** of each side wall member **16** is provided with a hand receiving opening **32** formed by cutting away the material of the long leg **18** below the flange means **31** thereof, the upper edge of each hand hold **32** being defined by a curved and reversely turned part **33** to provide a smooth handle surface to be grasped when carrying the carrying case **10** in a conventional manner.

The bottom wall member **12** comprises a one piece, substantially rectangular member formed of any suitable material and in any suitable manner.

For example, the bottom wall member **12** can be formed from masonite or the like, because the same is relatively strong and durable, will not bend, warp, crack, or absorb water and water-borne contamination, and gives the distinctive appearance of light-weight aluminum.

The bottom wall member **12** is provided with a plurality of drainage apertures **34** and slots **35** to permit any moisture in the carrying case **10** to readily drain therefrom.

When it is desired to assemble together a pair of side wall members **16** and a bottom wall member **12** to form the carrying case **10**, the peripheral edge of the bottom wall member **12** is inserted in the lower channel **27** of one of the side wall members **16** by effecting longitudinal movement therebetween. Thereafter, the other side wall member **16** is moved in the same plane as the other side ball member **16** to receive the remaining peripheral edge of the bottom wall member **12** in the bottom channel **27** thereof, as well as to cause the short legs **19** of each side wall member **16** to overlap the tab means **20** of the longer legs **18** thereof.

When the shorter legs **19** of the side wall members **16** have overlapped the tab means **20**, the entire peripheral edge of the bottom wall member **12** is received in the channels **27** of the side wall member **16** to prevent relative movement therebetween and secure the bottom wall member **12** thereto.

Subsequently, the side wall members **16** are secured together in the assembled position by the rivets **21** interconnecting the short legs **19** to the long legs **18** to produce a continuous side wall means **11**, as illustrated in FIGURE 1.

The divider structure **14** of this invention can be formed of any suitable material and in any suitable manner.

For example, the embodiment of the divider structure **14** illustrated in FIGURES 1 and 2 comprises an integrally molded structure of flexible material, such as a linear polyethylene or the like.

The divider structure **14** comprises a plurality of parallel and spaced longitudinal sections **36** integrally joined to a plurality of parallel and spaced transverse sections **37** at pillar structures **38**, the pillar structures **38** giving strength and rigidity to the divider structure **14**.

The longitudinal and transverse sections **36** and **37** are relieved inwardly from the bottoms thereof at **39** at the junctures thereof to not only reduce the weight of the divider structure **14** but also to add flexibility thereto and provide tapering ends on the sections **36** and **37** to facilitate easy removal of the divider structure **14** from the molding apparatus.

A plurality of horizontally disposed bars **40** are integrally joined to and project outwardly from the adjacent ends of the sections **36** and **37** to provide means for securing the divider structure **14** in the carrying case **10** in a manner now to be described.

In particular, the bars **40** are so constructed and arranged that the same define an outer periphery of the divider structure **14** which is slightly larger than the inner periphery of the carrying case **10** at the webs **30** thereof so that the divider structure **14** when inserted vertically downwardly into the rectangular compartment **13** of the carrying case **10** must be inwardly flexed to pass the webs **30** thereof.

As the divider structure **14** is pushed vertically downwardly into the rectangular compartment **13** of the carrying case **10**, the bars **40** thereof eventually clear the webs **30** of the side wall means **11** and snap outwardly underneath the flange means **31** thereof to hold the divider structure **14** in the carrying case **10** as illustrated in Figures 3 and 4.

If desired, the bars **40** of the divider structure **14** can be so constructed and arranged that the same, when snapped under the flange means **31** of the side wall means **11**, place the divider structure **14** under slight compression between the bottom wall member **12** and the flange means **31** as well as under slight compression between the opposed sides of the carrying case **10** whereby the bars **40** continually press against the inside surface of the webs **22** of the side wall means **11** as well as against the under surface of the flange means **31** of the side wall means **11** to firmly hold the divider structure **14** in place and prevent movement thereof relative to the carrying case **10**.

Therefore, it can be seen that it is a relatively simple operation to form the divider structure **14** in one-piece construction to provide a plurality of article receiving compartments **15** in the case **10**. Further, it is a relatively simple operation to insert the divider structure **14** in the carrying case **10** by merely inwardly flexing the divider structure **14** to clear the inwardly set webs **30** of the side wall means **11** so that the divider structure **14** can be snap fitted into its proper position in the carrying case **10**.

If desired, the central longitudinal section **36** of the divider structure **14** can be provided with a pair of outwardly directed lugs **41**, FIGURE 5, at the opposed ends thereof which are disposed below the bars **40** and are adapted to snap past the turned upper edges of the hand holds **32** when the divider structure **14** is inserted in the case **10** to engage the under surfaces of the turned edges **33** to further hold the divider structure **14** in place in the carrying case **10**, the lugs **41** respectively having caming surfaces **42** which permit the lugs **41** to be easily pushed beyond the turned edges **33** of the hand holds **32** when the divider structure **14** is initially inserted in the carrying case **10**.

Should the divider structure **14** become subsequently damaged during the use of the carrying case **10**, it is a relatively simple operation to remove the damaged divider structure **14** and replace the same with a new divider structure **14** without dismantling the remainder of the carrying case **10** as required in prior known constructions.

In particular, the damaged divider structure **14** can be readily removed from the carrying case **10** by inwardly flexing the same so as to clear the bars **40** thereof from under the flange means **31** so that the divider structure **14** can be vertically lifted from the carrying case **10**.

Thereafter, a new divider structure **14** can be inserted in the carrying case **10** in the manner previously described by inwardly flexing the same to permit the bars **40** to clear the inset webs **30** and be snapped underneath the flange means **31** to hold the new divider structure **14** in place in the above manner.

While the divider structure **14** previously described has the relieved portions **39** to reduce the weight of the divider structure **14** as well as add flexibility thereto, it has been found that beverage bottle distributors normally ignore the handholes **32** when carrying the carrying cases **10**.

For example, the beverage bottle distributor normally grasps the neck of a bottle disposed adjacent the hand hold **32** at one end of the carrying case **10** to carry the carrying case **10**.

Therefore, it may be desirable to provide the divider structure **14** without relieving either the longitudinal sections **36** or transverse sections **37** at the opposed ends thereof so as to provide substantially rigid structure throughout the joining lengths of the longitudinal sections **36** and transverse sections **37** at the end rows thereof.

In this manner, should the beverage bottle distributor grasp one of the end bottles to carry the carrying case **10**, the sections **36** and **37** have greater strength to resist the forces placed thereon when an end bottle is grasped to lift the carrying case **10** than when the sections **36** and **37** are relieved at **39** as previously described.

However, it has been found that even though the terminal portions of the sections **36** and **37** are relieved at **39**, the same still have sufficient structural strength to withstand the forces imposed thereon when the carrying case **10** is being carried by one of the end bottles thereof.

It has been found that the carrying case **10** of this invention can have the compartment **13** thereof provided with a longitudinal dimension between the inside surfaces of the opposed end walls thereof of approximately 17½ inches below the flange means **31** and a transverse dimension between the inside surfaces of the opposed side walls thereof of approximately 11⅝ inches below the flange means **31** to permit the divider structure **14** disposed therein to receive twenty-four, twelve or sixteen ounce bottles.

However, should it be desired to utilize the same size carrying case **10** with twenty-four, six, eight or ten ounce bottles, the bottle-receiving compartments **15** of the divider structure **14** are too large to properly hold the smaller sized bottles.

Therefore, in order to adapt that particular carrying case **10** to smaller sized bottles, the divider structure **14** would have to have the widths of the sections **36** and **37** thereof substantially increased whereby the overall cost of the divider structure **14** would be excessive.

However, it has been found that special divider structure can be utilized with such a size carrying case **10** to convert the same from twelve or sixteen ounce bottles to six, eight or ten ounce bottles by merely removing the large bottle-receiving divider structure **14** and replacing the same with another divider structure of this invention adapted to receive smaller sized bottles.

In particular, another divider structure of this invention is generally indicated by the reference numeral **42** in FIGURES 6 and 7, and comprises a plurality of longitudinal sections **36***a* and transverse sections **37***a* formed in the same manner previously described to provide a divider, structure **42** adapted to be inserted in and secured to the carrying case **10** in the manner previously described, the sections **36***a* and **37***a* having the same widths as the sections **36** and **37**.

However, the individual article receiving compartment

15*a* of the divider structure **42** are effectively "shrunk" from the size of the divider structure **14** by a plurality of beads **43** extending vertically down the mid-points of the sections **36***a* and **37***a* of each compartment **15***a* to accommodate the smaller sized bottles **44** as illustrated in FIGURE 6.

Therefore, it can be seen that the divider structure **42** can be made with substantially the same amount of material as the divider structure **14** previously described and can be utilized in a carrying case normally adapted to carry twenty-four, twelve or sixteen ounce bottles to convert the carrying case **10** to effectively carry twenty-four six, eight or ten ounce bottles, the divider structure **42** being similar to the divider structure **14** previously described in all material respects except for the beads **43**.

Alternately, another divider structure **45**, FIGURES 8 and 9, can be utilized with the larger carrying case **10** to convert the same from twelve or sixteen ounce bottles to six, eight or ten ounce bottles.

In particular, the divider structure **45** is formed in substantially the same manner as the divider structure **14** previously described except that the longitudinal sections **36***b* and transverse sections **37***b* respectively have outwardly directed horizontally disposed beads **46** formed along the upper edges thereof to effectively shrink the bottle receiving compartments **15***b* thereof to receive the smaller sized bottles **44**.

Therefore, it can be seen that the divider structure **45** utilizes substantially the same amount of material as the divider structure **14** previously described but permits the larger size carrying case **10** to effectively carry smaller sized bottles than the divider structure **14** previously described.

Since the divider structures **14**, **42** and **45** of this invention can be readily snapped into and out of place in the carrying case **10** in the manner previously described, to convert the same from large size bottles to small size bottles without dismantling the case or requiring excessive maintenance costs, the bottler need only buy one particular size of the carrying case **10** and can convert the same back and forth between large sized bottles and small sized bottles by utilizing the various divider structures of this invention in a relatively simple and non-time consuming manner.

Further, by following the teachings of this invention, the bottler can utilize the same size carrying case **10** to carry four six-pack cartons of bottles or the like by merely reducing the size of the compartment **13** of the carrying case **10** by an adapter **47** of this invention illustrated in FIGURES 10–15.

As previously set forth, the carrying case **10** has a longitudinal inside dimension of approximately 17½ inches and a transverse dimension of approximately 11⅝ inches below the flange means **31** to permit the carrying case **10** to receive the divider structure **14** to carry twenty-four, twelve or sixteen ounce bottles.

However, it has been found that when a carrying case or the like is utilized to carry four, six-pack cartons of bottles or the like, the inside dimensions of the compartment receiving the same should have a longitudinal dimension of approximately 14½ inches and a transverse inside dimension of approximately 10⅛ inches.

Therefore, by utilizing the adapter **47** of this invention with the carrying case **10** adapted to be utilized with the divider structure **14** for carrying twenty-four, twelve or sixteen ounce bottles, the bottler is adapted to convert the carrying case **10** to a carrying case for four six-pack cartons of bottles or the like.

As illustrated in FIGURES 13–15, the adapter **47** of this invention comprises two like members **48** secured together by stub welds **49** or the like to define a pair of opposed side courses **50** and a pair of opposed end courses **51** integrally joined together and generally disposed in the same plane.

The side courses **50** respectively have outwardly directed, U-shaped sections **52** which define inwardly disposed, U-shaped sections **53** intermediate the same.

The end courses **51** of the adapter **47** each have a pair of inwardly disposed sections **54** integrally interconnected to the end outwardly disposed sections **52** of the side courses **50**, the adjacent inwardly disposed sections **54** of the respective end course **51** being joined together by a downwardly and outwardly extending V-shaped section **55**.

The distance between opposed inwardly set sections **53** of the side courses **50** is approximately 10⅛ inches while the distance between the inwardly disposed sections **54** of the end courses **51** is approximately 14½ inches.

When the diameter or thickness of the adapter **47** is approximately ½ of an inch, the distance between the outwardly disposed portions of opposed outwardly disposed sections **52** of the side courses **50** is approximately 11⅝ inches while the distance between the outboard portions of the apexes of the V-shaped sections **55** of the end courses **51** is approximately 17½ inches whereby it can be seen that the adapter **47** can be readily inserted in the carrying case **10** having the aforementioned dimensions to reduce the effective compartment size thereof to one adapted to receive four, six-pack cartons **56** of bottles or the like illustrated in FIGURE 11.

While the adapter **47** can be formed of any suitable material and in any suitable manner, it is preferred that the adapter be formed of sufficiently resilient material so that the same can be snap fitted into the carrying case **10** without dismantling the carrying case **10**.

For example, the adapter **47** can be formed from plastic material in a manner similar to the divider structures **14**, **42** and **45**.

Alternately the adapter **47** can be formed from aluminum-containing metallic material, such as aluminum alloy 5052–H34 or 6061–T4.

In addition, the adapter **47** can be formed of carbon steel coated with plastic or the like.

In any event, the adapter **47** is made of sufficiently resilient material so that when the adapter **47** is inserted in carrying case **10**, the adapter **47** is adapted to have the outboard portions **52** and **55** thereof inwardly flexed to clear the inset webs **30** of the side wall means **11** so that the side sections **52** are adapted to snap under the flange means **31** of the side wall means **11** at the same time that the apexes of the V-shaped sections **55** of the end courses **51** engage the bottom wall means **12** of the carrying case **10**, the apexes of the V-shaped sections **55** of the end courses **51** also engaging the inside surface of the side wall means **11**.

The adapter **47** can be so constructed and arranged relative to the carrying case **10** that the side courses **50** thereof are placed under slight compression between the opposed sides of the carrying case **10** as well as under slight compression between the flange means **31** and the bottom wall means **12** of the carrying case **10** to prevent relative movement of the adapter **47** relative to the carrying case **10**.

When the adapter **47** has been snap fitted into the carrying case **10** in the manner illustrated in FIGURE 10, four like, six-pack cartons **56** of bottles or the like are adapted to be disposed in the reduced compartment of the carrying case **10** in the manner illustrated in FIGURE 11 whereby the sides of the cartons **56** are adapted to respectively engage or be guided by the inwardly disposed sections **53** and **54** of the adapter **47**.

As fully illustrated in FIGURE 10, the V-shaped sections **55** of the end courses **51** of the adapter **47** are adapted to straddle the hand holds **32** whereby the adapter **47** in no way distracts from the normal carrying procedure of the carrying case **10**.

Therefore, it can be seen that a standard size carrying case **10** can be provided to carry twenty-four, twelve or sixteen ounce bottles by utilizing the divider structure **14** of this invention. The same carrying case can then be converted to carry twenty-four, six eight or ten ounce bottles by removing the divider structure **14** and replacing the same with a divider structure **42** or **45** of this invention. Further, the same size carrying case can be converted to carry four, six-pack cartons of bottles or the like by removing the divider structure thereof and replacing the same with the adapter **47** of this invention whereby the particular carrying case **10** has many applications thereof without requiring the beverage bottler to maintain various sized carrying bases, as in the past.

Therefore, the beverage bottler need only maintain equipment and machinery adapted to handle a particular sized carrying case **10** even though the carrying case **10** is utilized for a number of different purposes.

Accordingly, it can be seen that this invention provides an improved carrying case for bottles or the like as well as an improved divider structure and parts thereof for converting the carrying case to carry bottles and cartons of different sizes.

While certain dimensions and materials have heretofore been given as examples, it is to be understood that the same are not limitations of the invention and are merely given as typical examples that can be utilized.

While the form of the invention now preferred has been disclosed as required by the statutes, other forms may be used, all coming within the scope of the claim which follows.

What is claimed is:

A carrying case for bottles and the like and having side wall means and bottom wall means cooperating together to define an open ended compartment in said case, said side wall means having inwardly directed horizontal flange means disposed out of the plane of said side wall means and opposed hand-receiving openings each having an inwardly turned horizontal edge, and a divider structure snap-fittingly disposed in said compartment solely by the flexure of said divider structure, said divider structure having a plurality of longitudinally disposed and vertically extending section means provided with opposed ends, said divider structure having a plurality of transversely disposed and vertically extending section means provided with opposed ends, said section means cooperating together to define article-receiving compartments, said divider structure having a plurality of horizontally disposed bars respectively joining together adjacent ends of said section means and disposed between said bottom wall means and said flange means to hold said divider structure in said compartment of said case, said section means having means engaging the undersurfaces of said turned edges of said side wall means to further hold said divider structure in said case.

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