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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication****Luch**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0269282 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 8, 2005**(54) **TAMPER-EVIDENT CAP AND CONTAINER NECK**(75) Inventor: **Daniel Luch**, Morgan Hill, CA (US)

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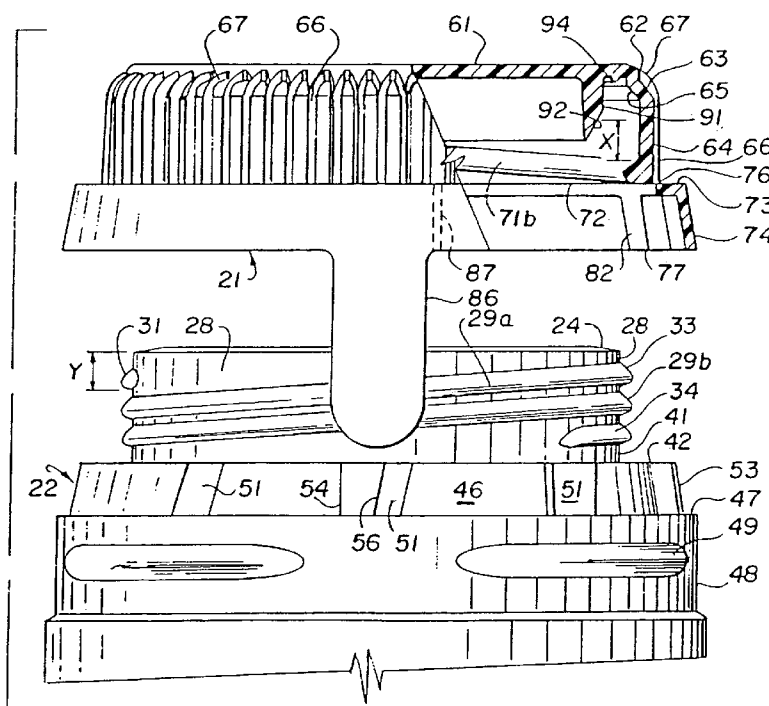
**DORSEY & WHITNEY LLP****555 CALIFORNIA STREET, SUITE 1000****SUITE 1000****SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104 (US)**(73) Assignee: **Portola Packaging, Inc.**, San Jose, CA(21) Appl. No.: **11/057,952**(22) Filed: **Feb. 14, 2005****Related U.S. Application Data**

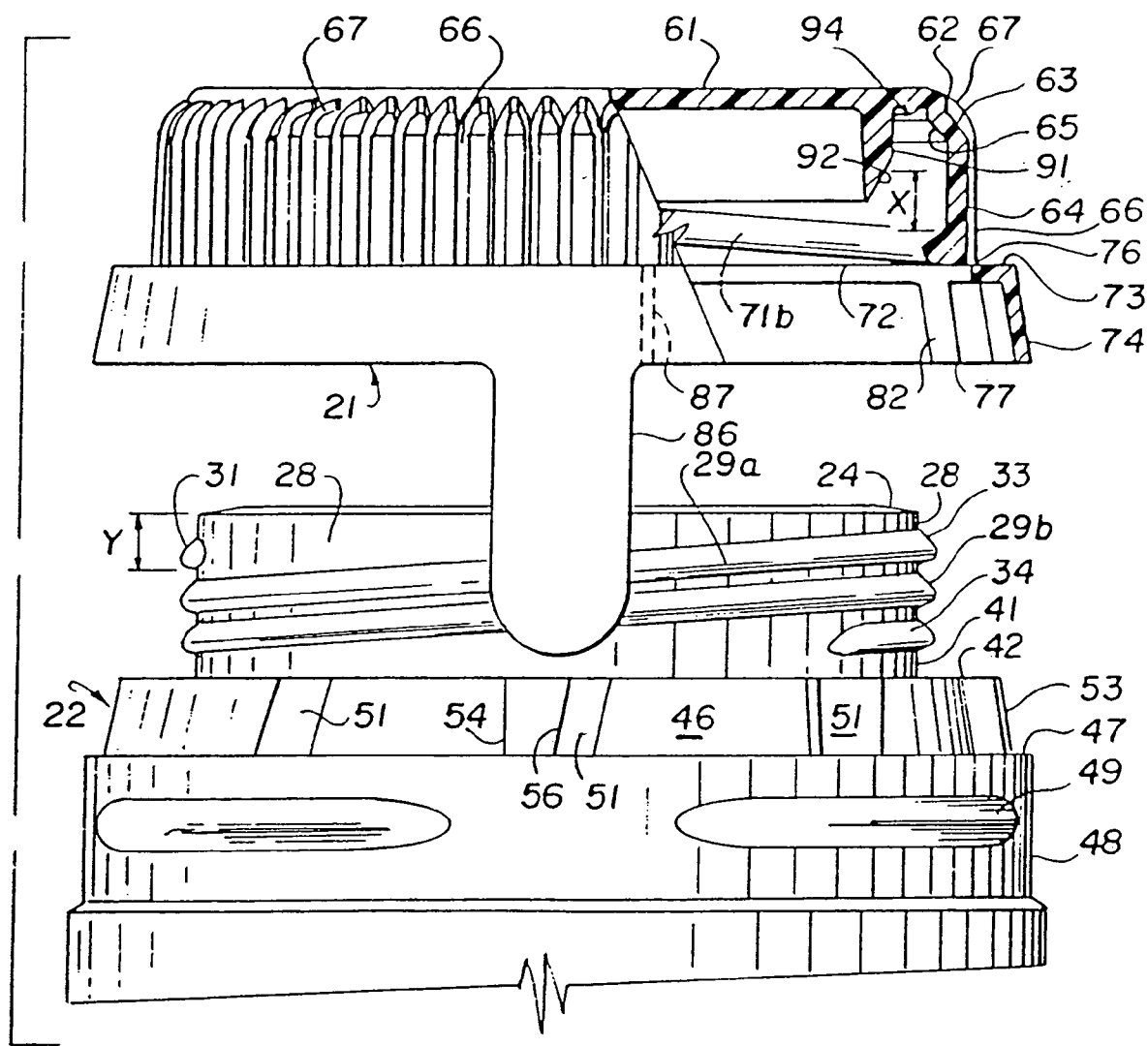
(60) Continuation-in-part of application No. 10/668,780, filed on Sep. 22, 2003, now abandoned, which is a continuation of application No. 10/210,716, filed on Jul. 30, 2002, now Pat. No. 6,637,611, which is a continuation of application No. 09/746,882, filed on Dec. 22, 2000, now Pat. No. 6,439,412, which is a continuation of application No. 09/356,063, filed on Jul. 19, 1999, now Pat. No. 6,173,853, which is a continuation of application No. 09/071,625, filed on May 1, 1998, now Pat. No. 5,975,321, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 08/781,453, filed on Jan. 10, 1997, now Pat. No. 5,755,348, which is a continuation of application No. 08/456,741, filed on Jun. 1, 1995, now abandoned, which is a division of application No. 08/029,177, filed on Mar. 10, 1993, now Pat. No. 5,456,376, which is a continuation-in-

part of application No. 07/830,133, filed on Jan. 31, 1992, now Pat. No. 5,267,661, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 07/772,945, filed on Oct. 8, 1991, now Pat. No. 5,213,224, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 07/565,638, filed on Aug. 9, 1990, now Pat. No. 5,190,178.

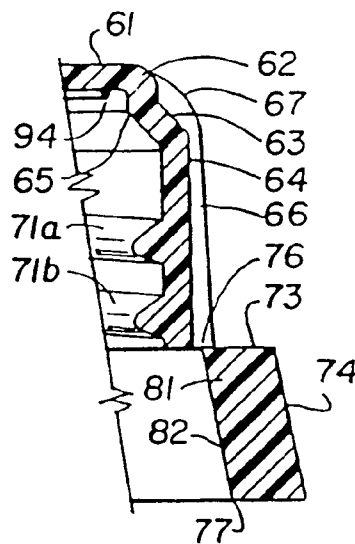
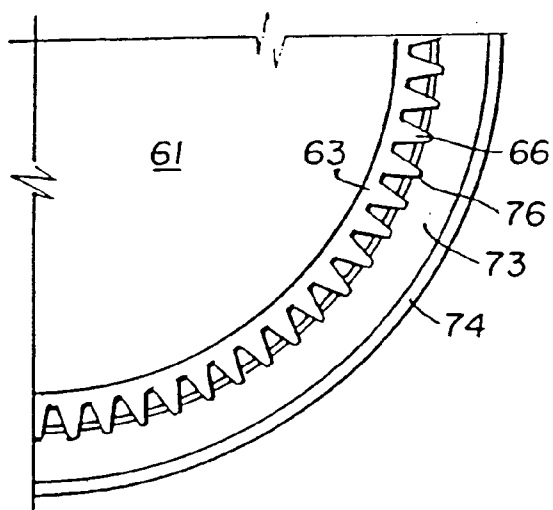
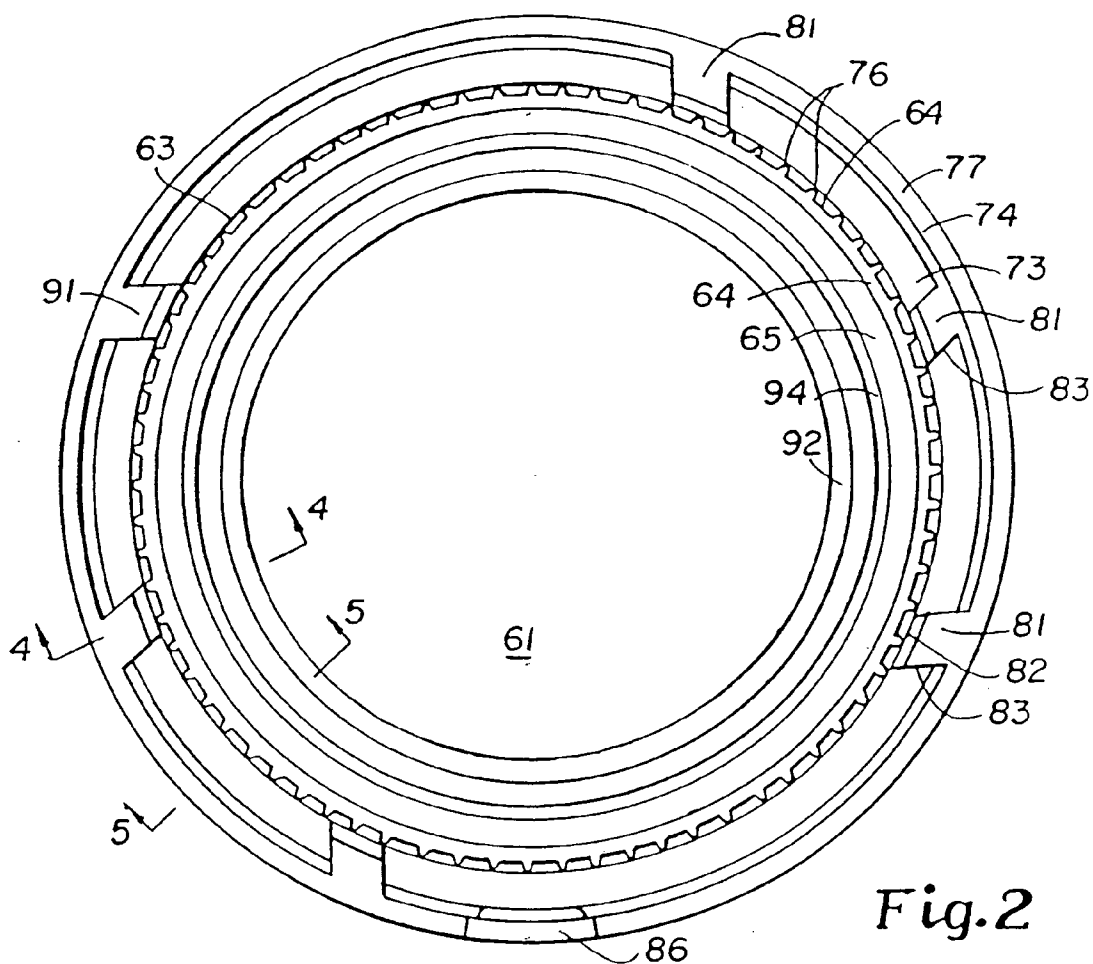
**Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.<sup>7</sup> ..... B65D 41/34**(52) **U.S. Cl. .... 215/256; 215/318; 215/320; 215/354**(57) **ABSTRACT**

A tamper-evident, snap-on, screw-off closure is used with a specially shaped container neck. The neck has at least one first helical thread on an upper neck stretch portion, and at least one external ratchet tooth on a locking wall portion below the upper neck stretch portion. The closure has an upper skirt having at least one second helical thread mating with the first helical thread of the neck. A downward extending lower skirt portion includes an outer skirt portion and a shoulder extending inwardly from said outer skirt portion. A frangible section interconnects the shoulder and the upper skirt portion. At least one substantially vertical castle projection is formed upstanding from the shoulder, preventing upward deformation of the lower skirt portion without breaking the frangible section. The lower skirt portion has at least one internal ratchet tooth, and is formed with a line of weakness extending through the outer skirt portion and the shoulder. The lower skirt has a tear tab which, when pulled, fractures the lower skirt on a vertical line. Continued pulling on the tab sequentially fractures the frangible section.





**Fig.1**



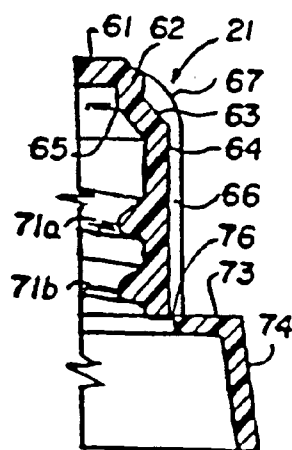


Fig. 5

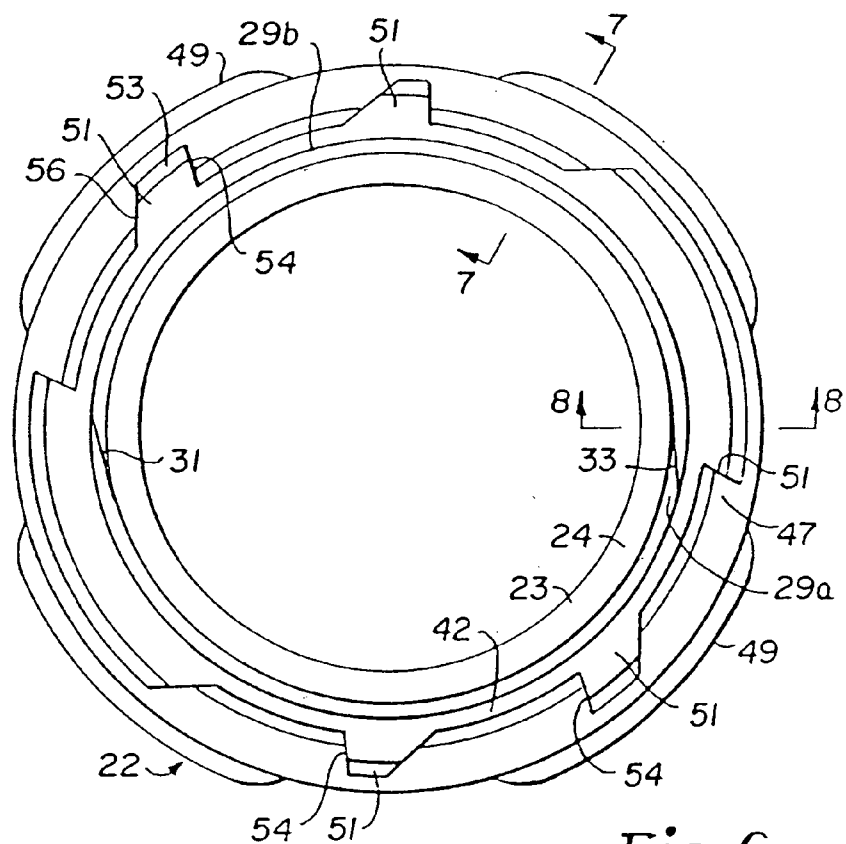


Fig. 6

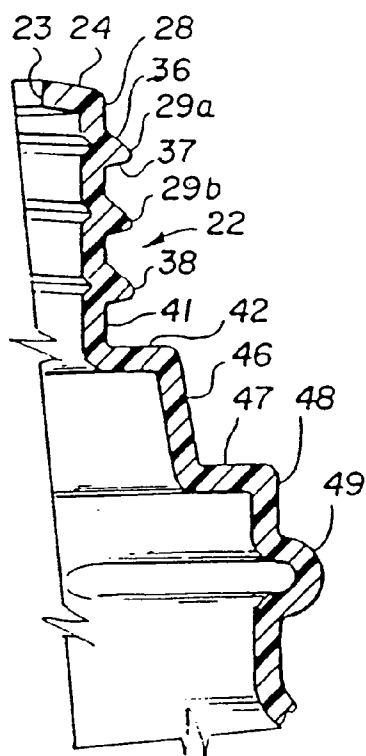


Fig. 7

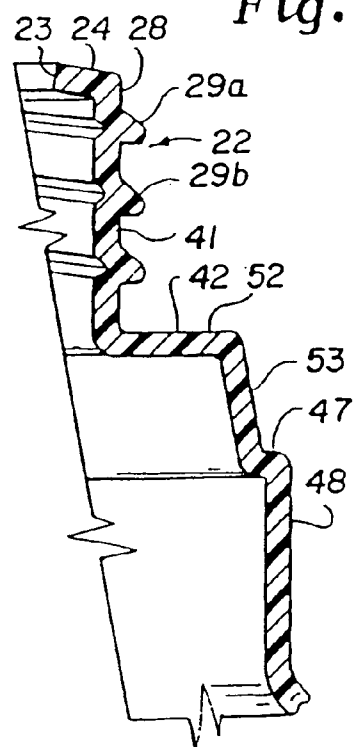


Fig. 8

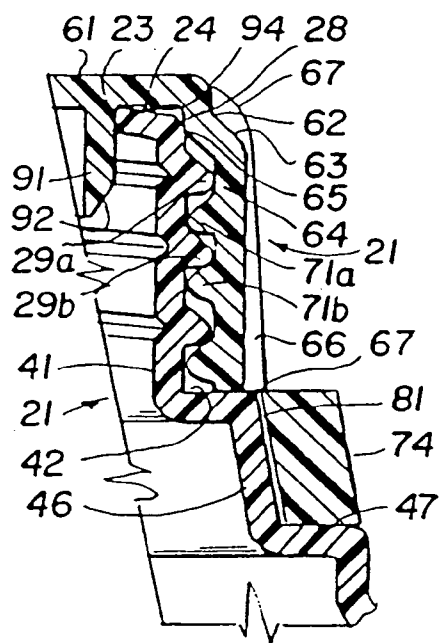


Fig. 9

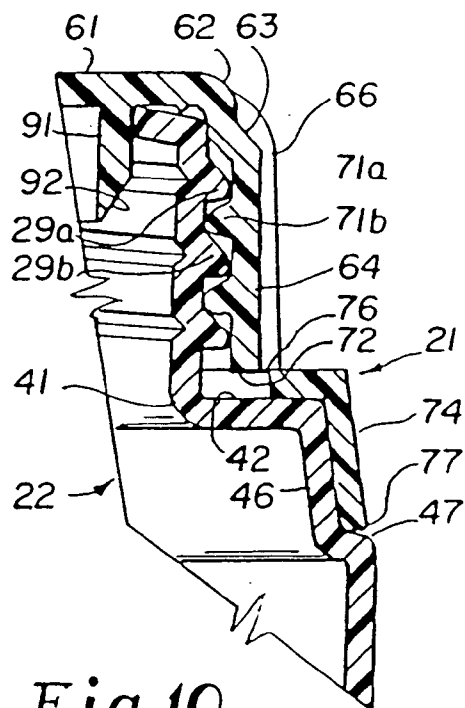


Fig. 10

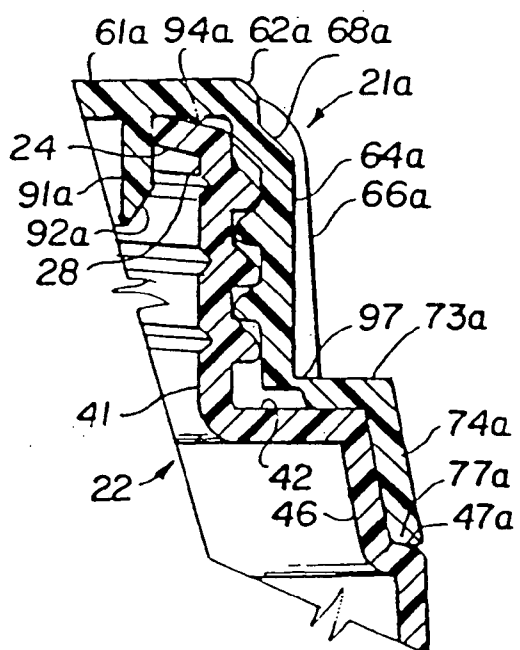


Fig. 10A

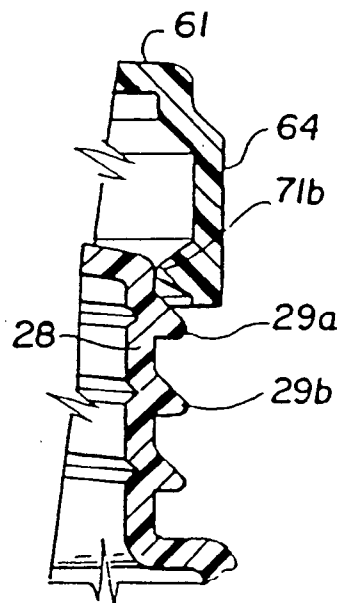
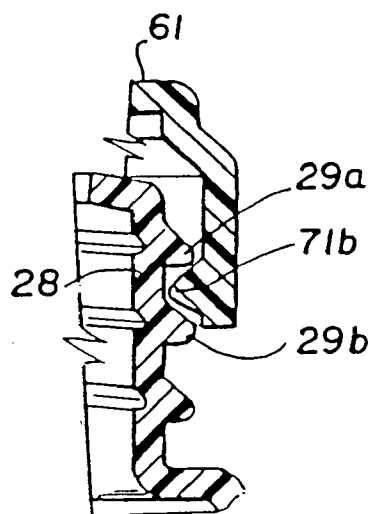
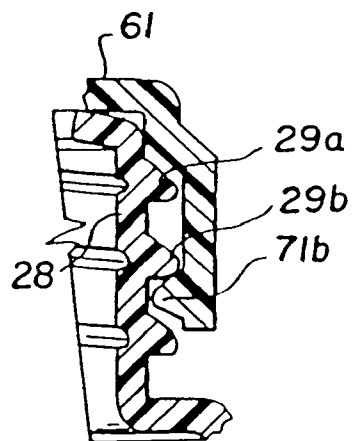


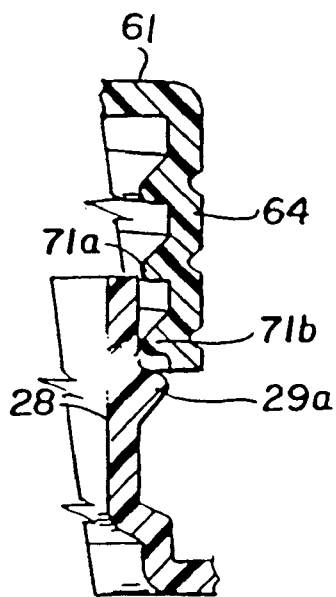
Fig. 11A



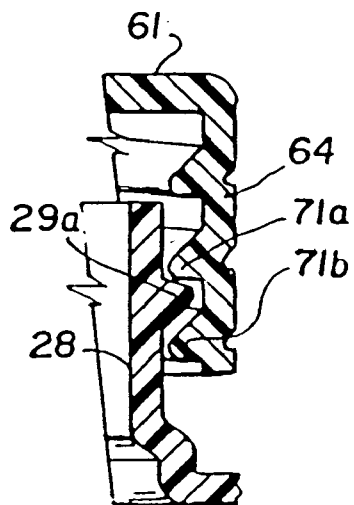
*Fig. 11B*



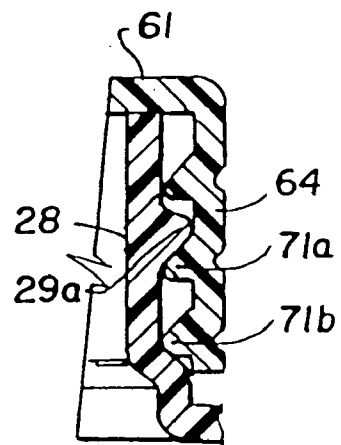
*Fig. 11C*



*Fig. 12A*



*Fig. 12B*



*Fig. 12C*

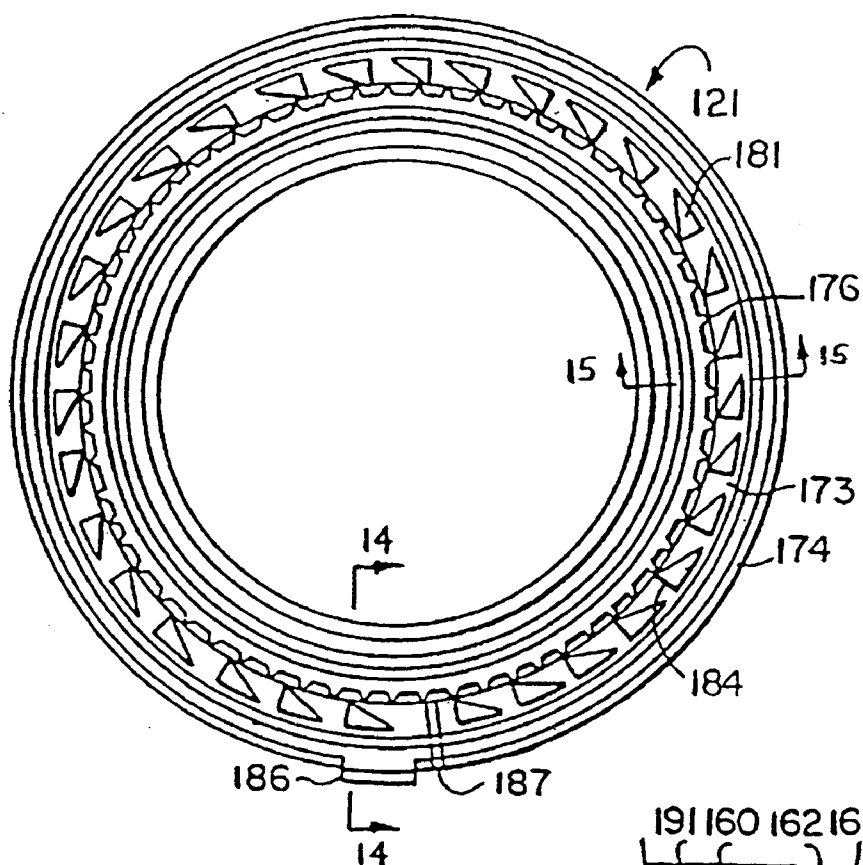


FIG. 13

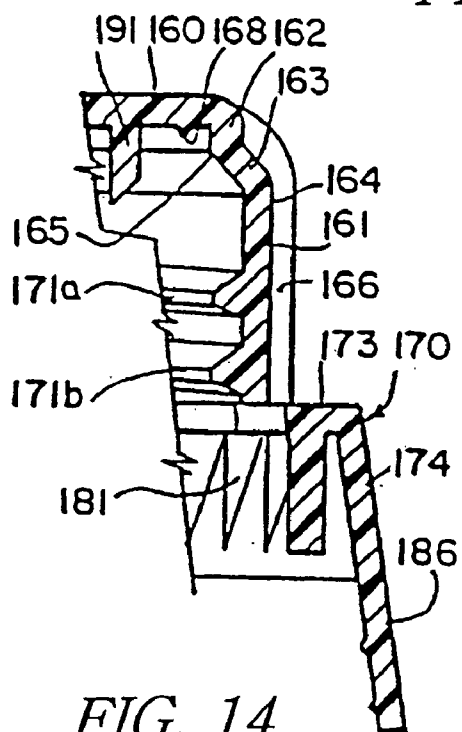


FIG. 14

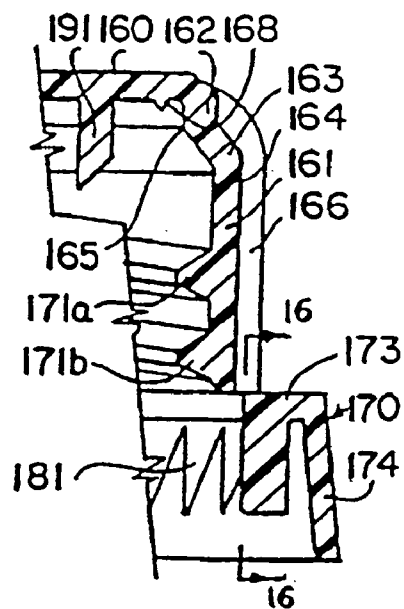


FIG. 15

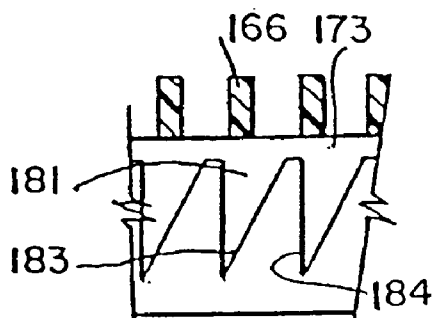


FIG. 16

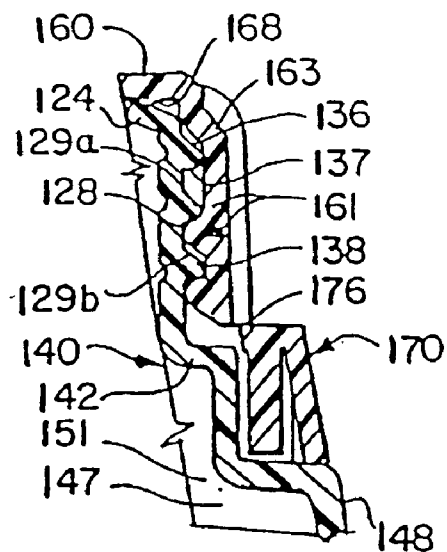


FIG. 17

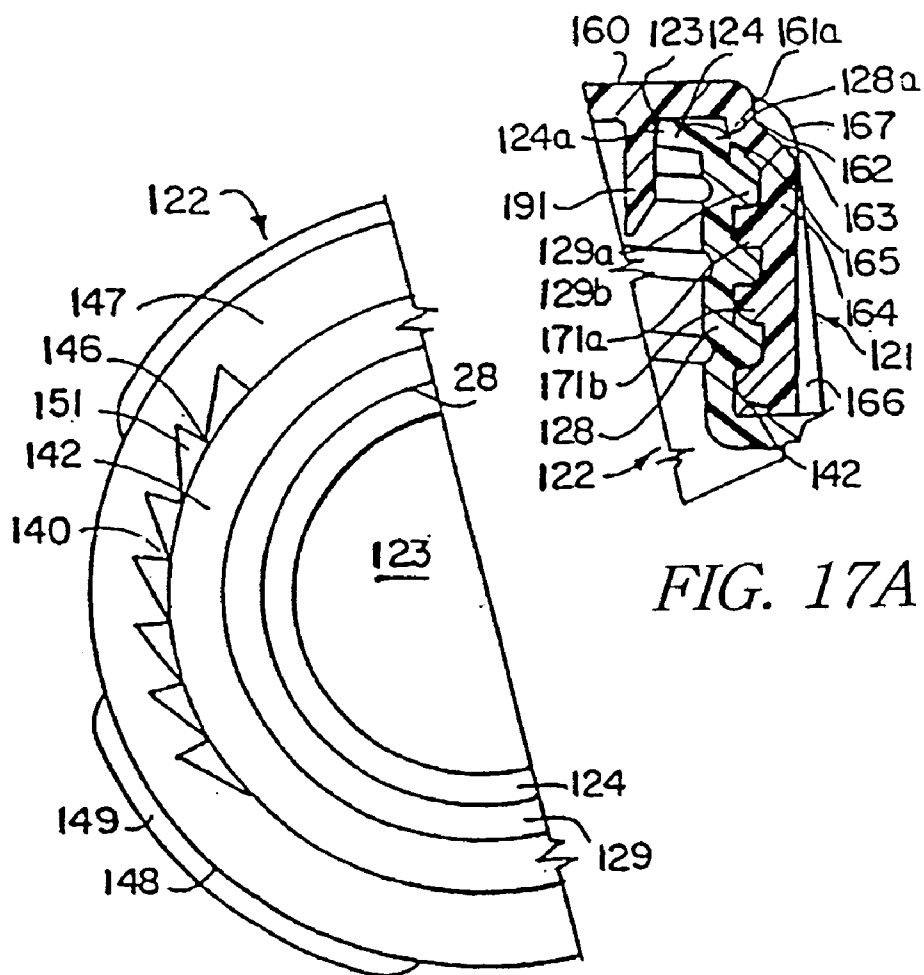


FIG. 17A

FIG. 18



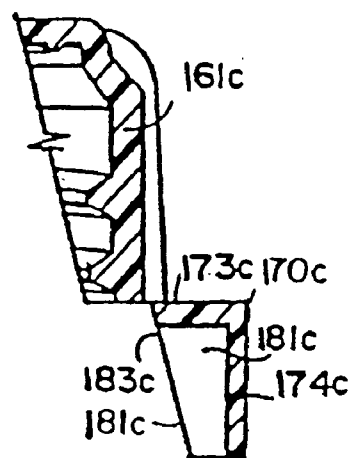


FIG. 20

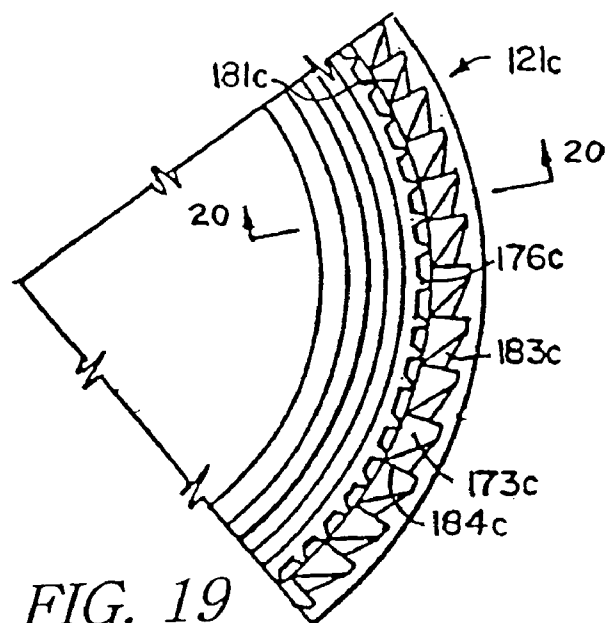


FIG. 19

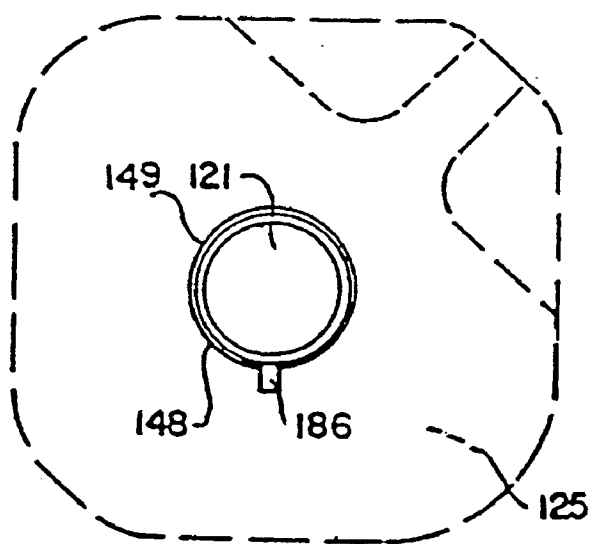


FIG. 25

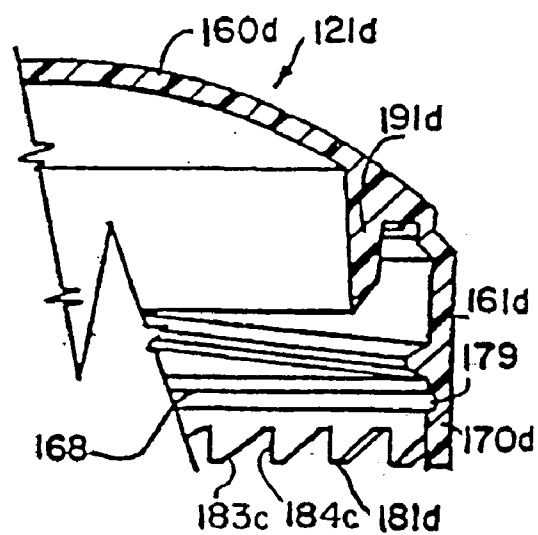


FIG. 21

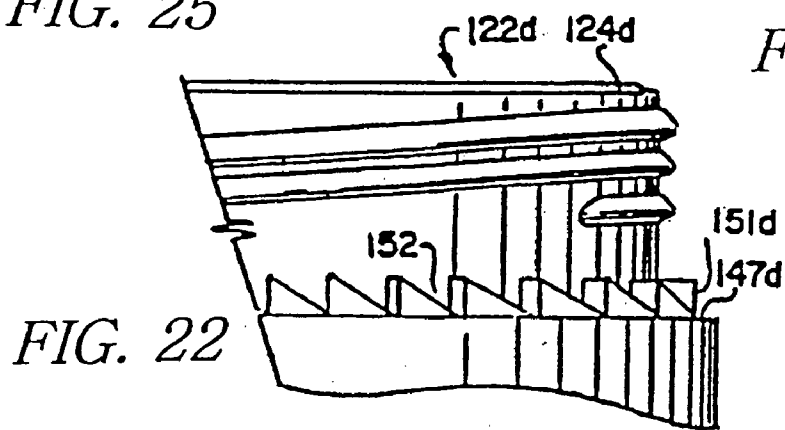


FIG. 22

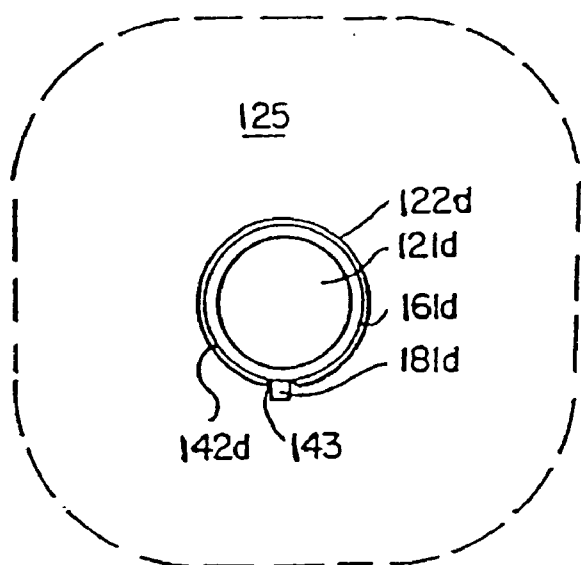


FIG. 23

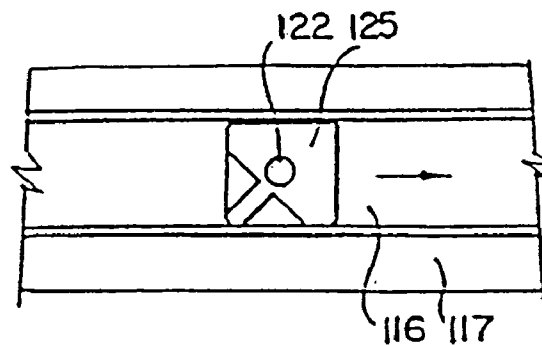


FIG. 27

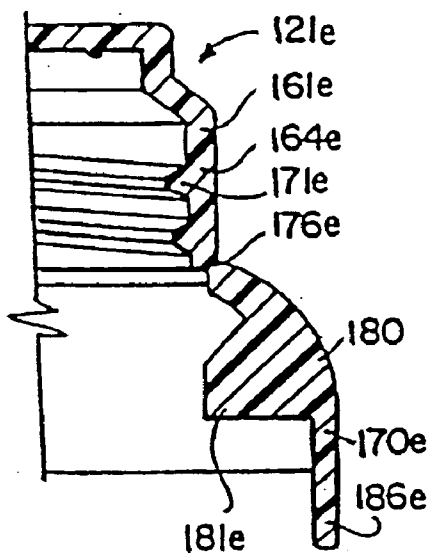


FIG. 24

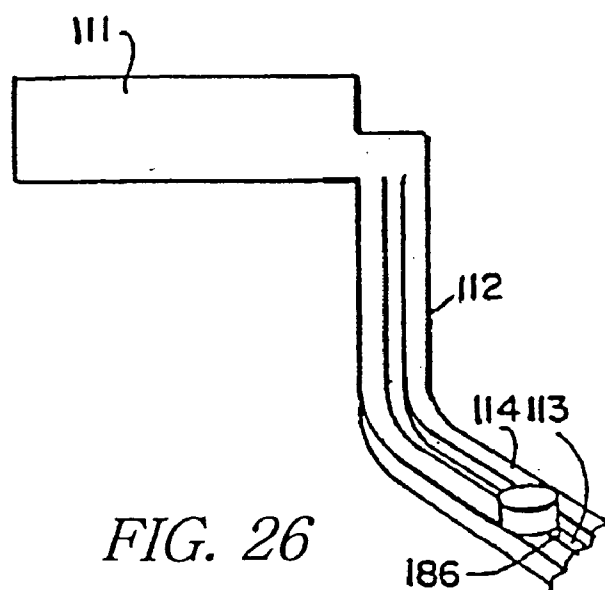


FIG. 26

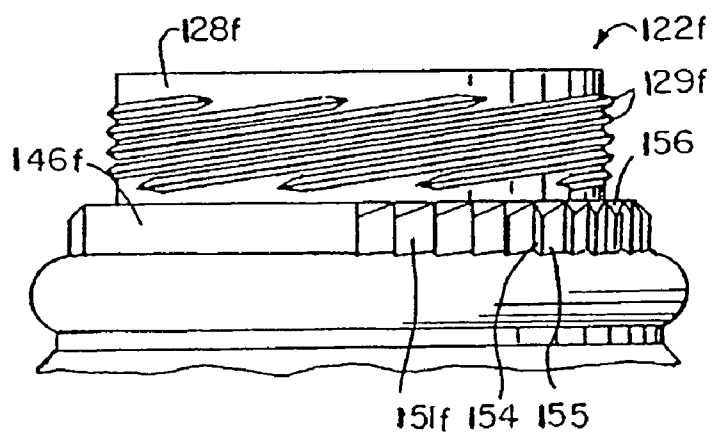


FIG. 28

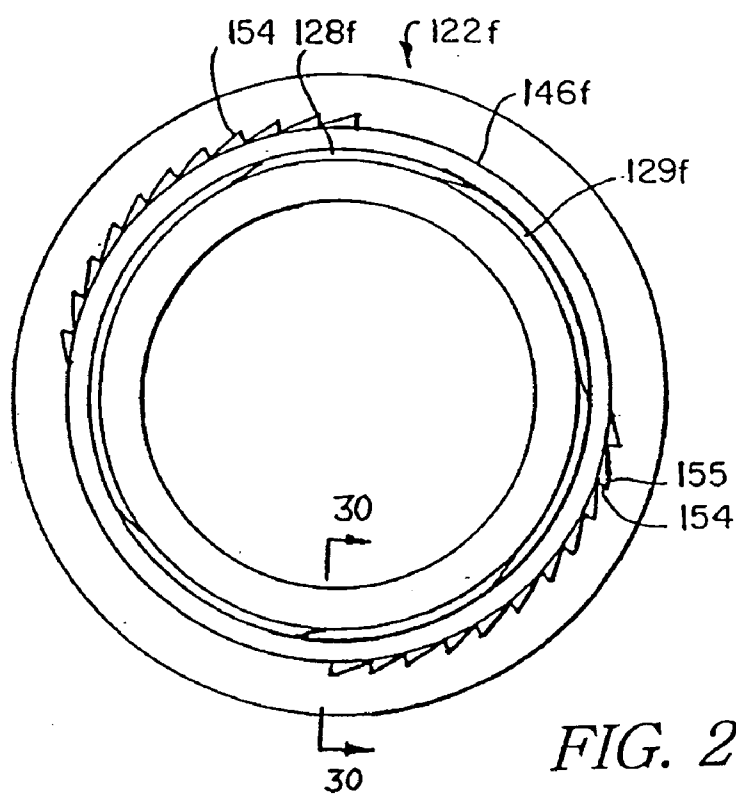


FIG. 29

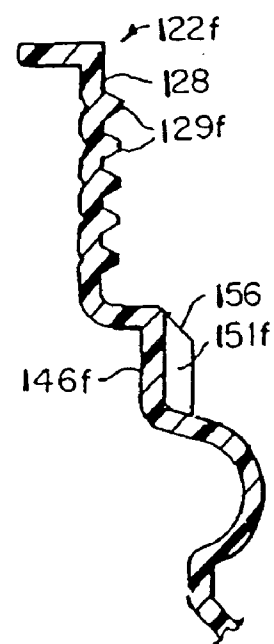


FIG. 30

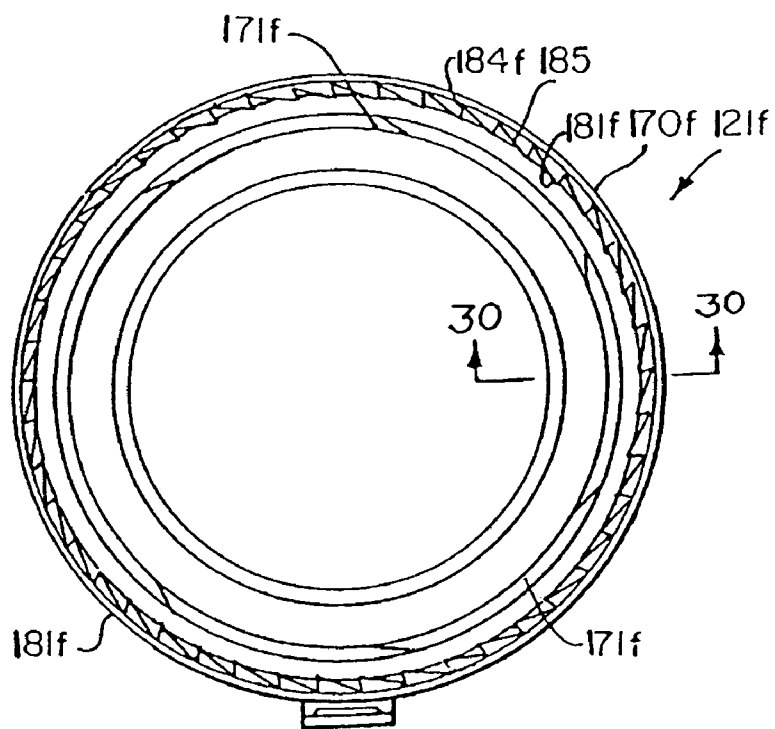


FIG. 31

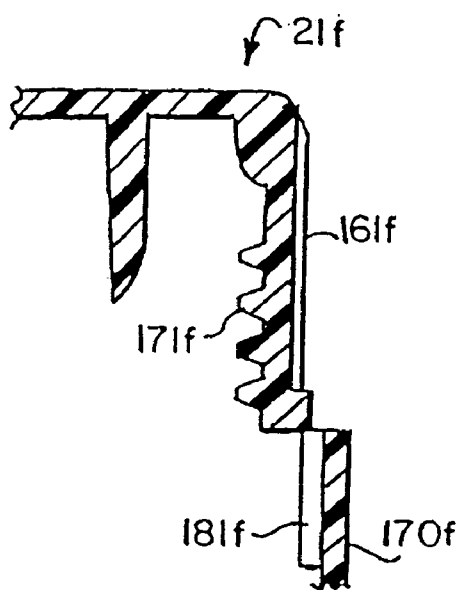


FIG. 32

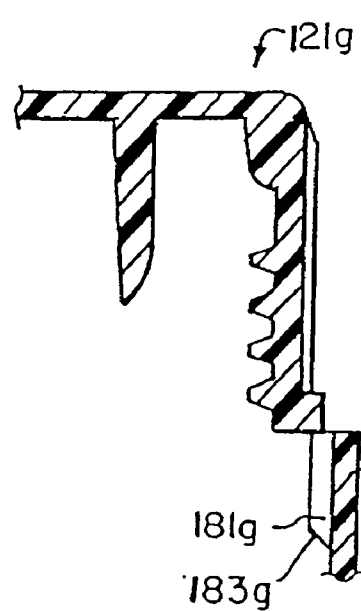


FIG. 33

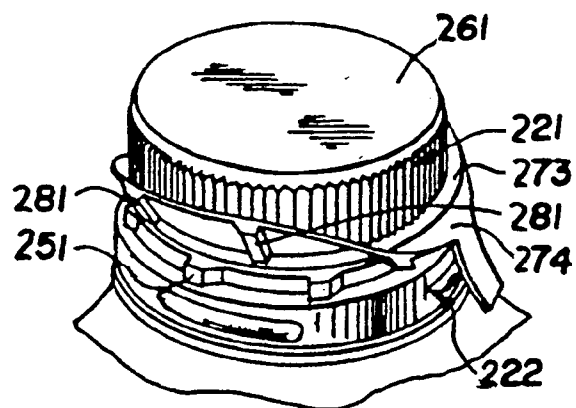


FIG. 34

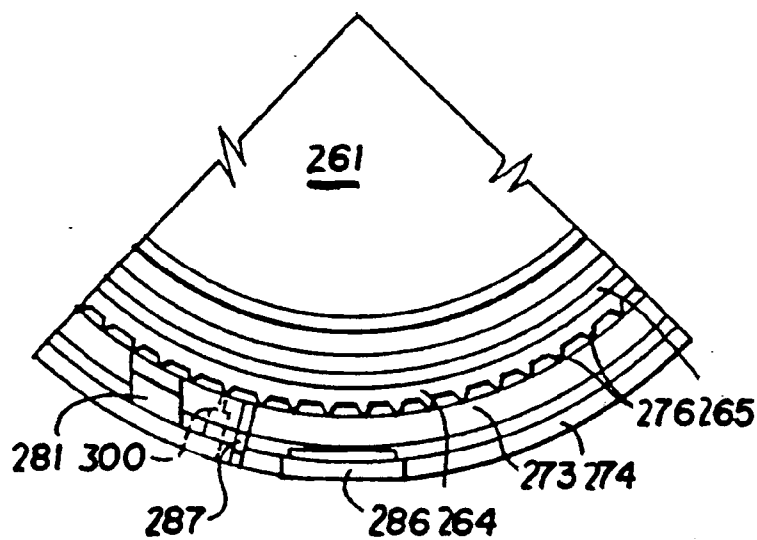


FIG. 36

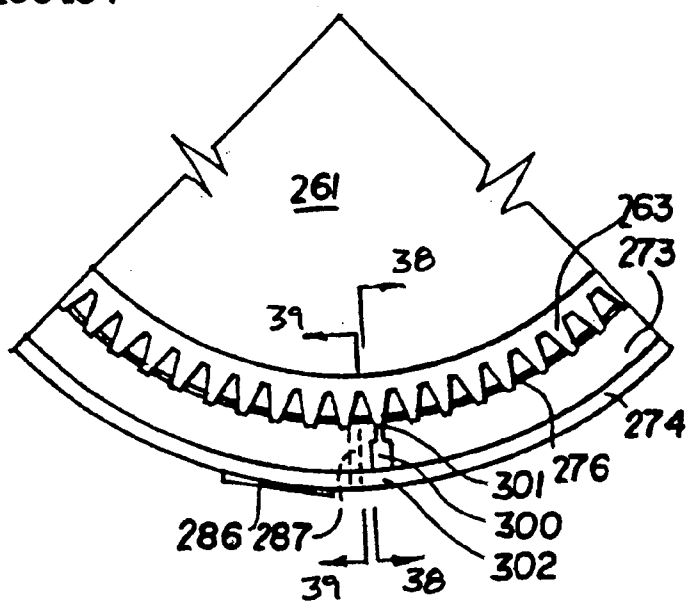
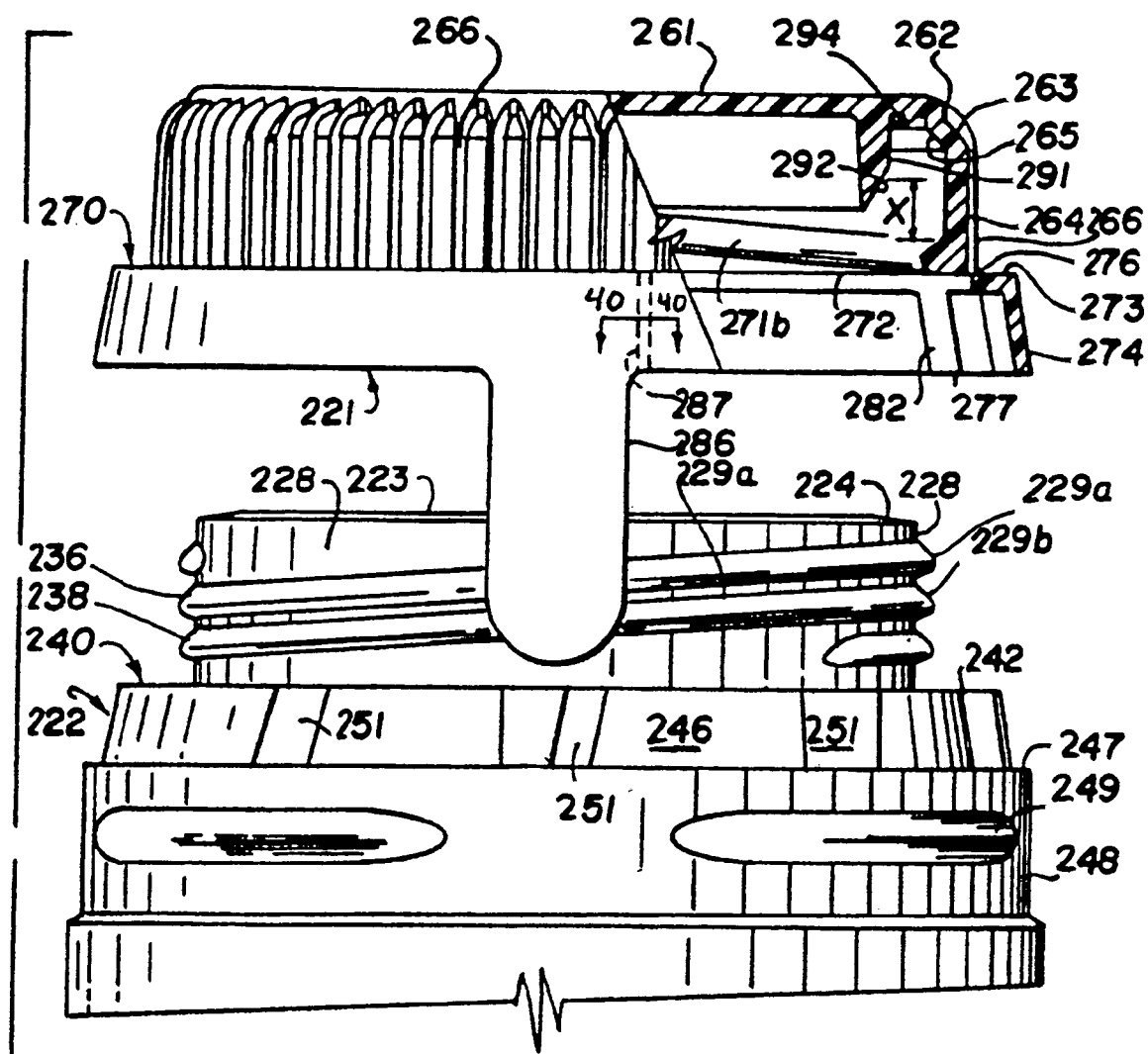


FIG. 37



**FIG. 35**

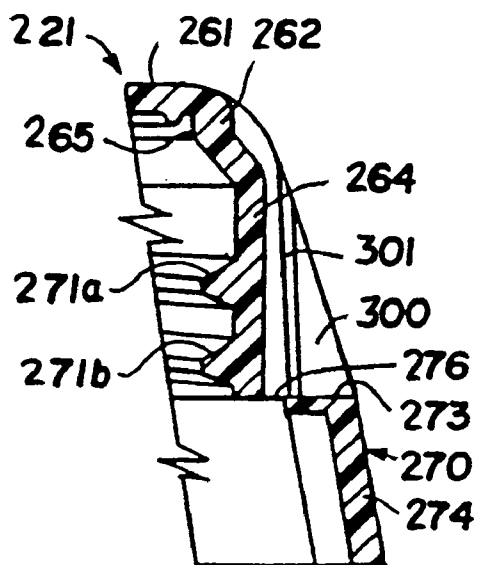


FIG. 38

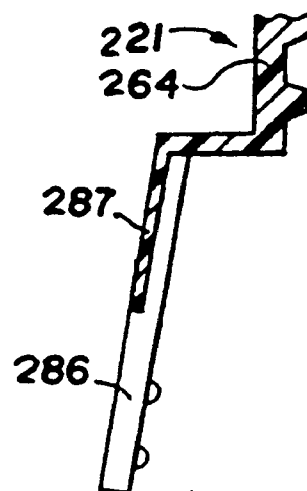


FIG. 39



FIG. 40

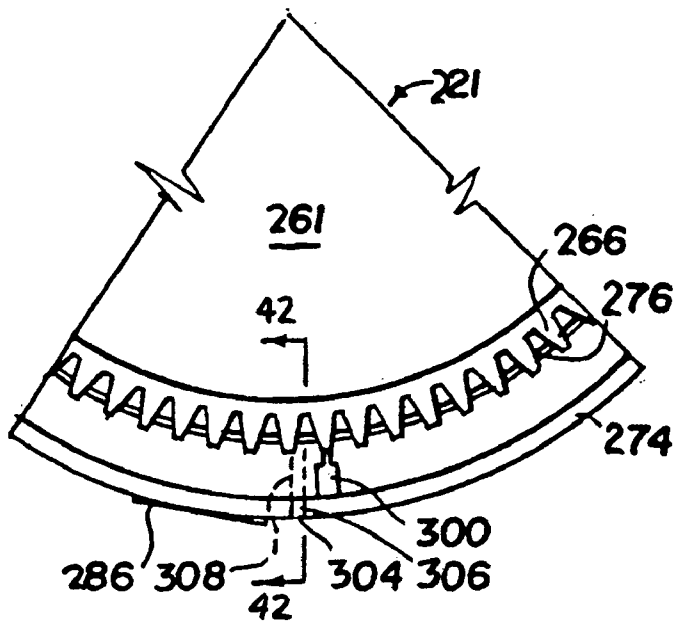


FIG. 41

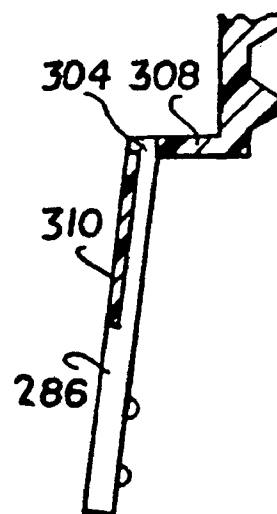
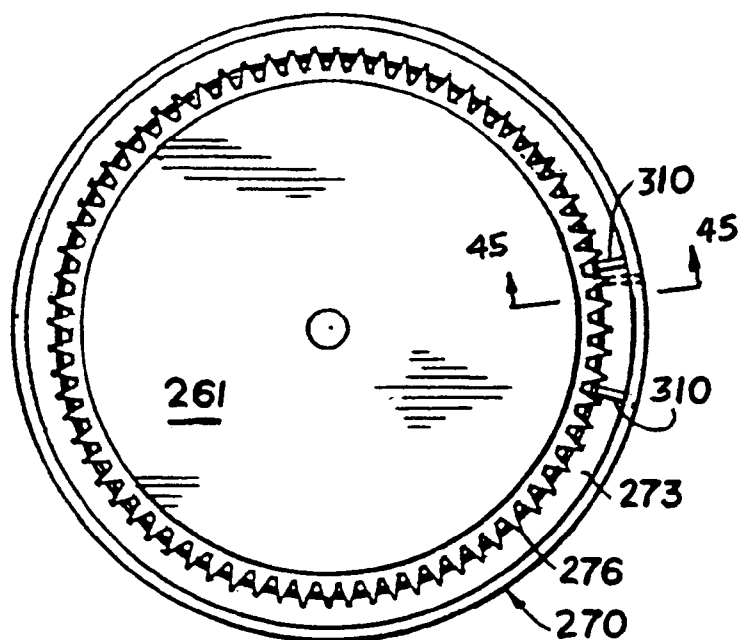
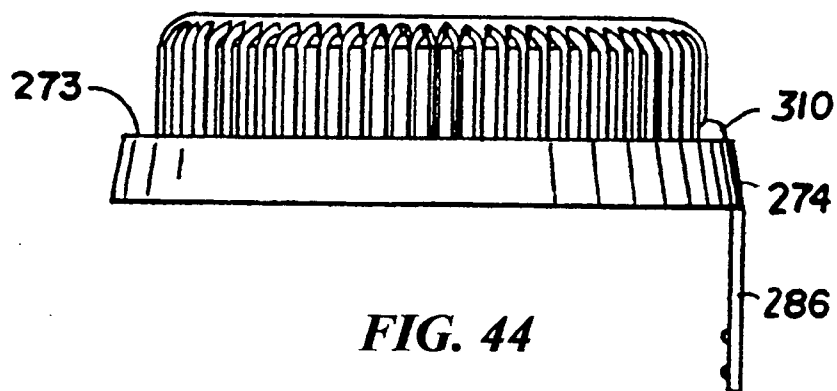


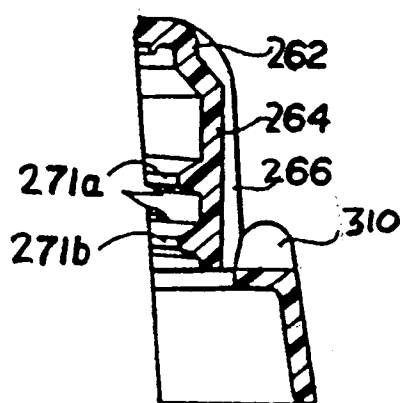
FIG. 42



**FIG. 43**

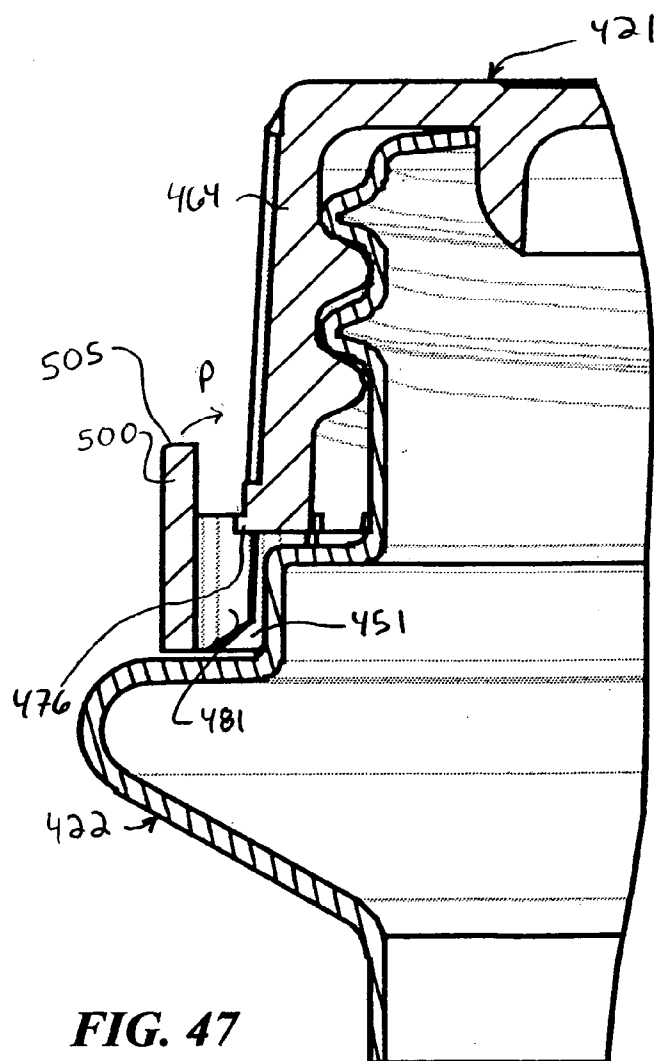
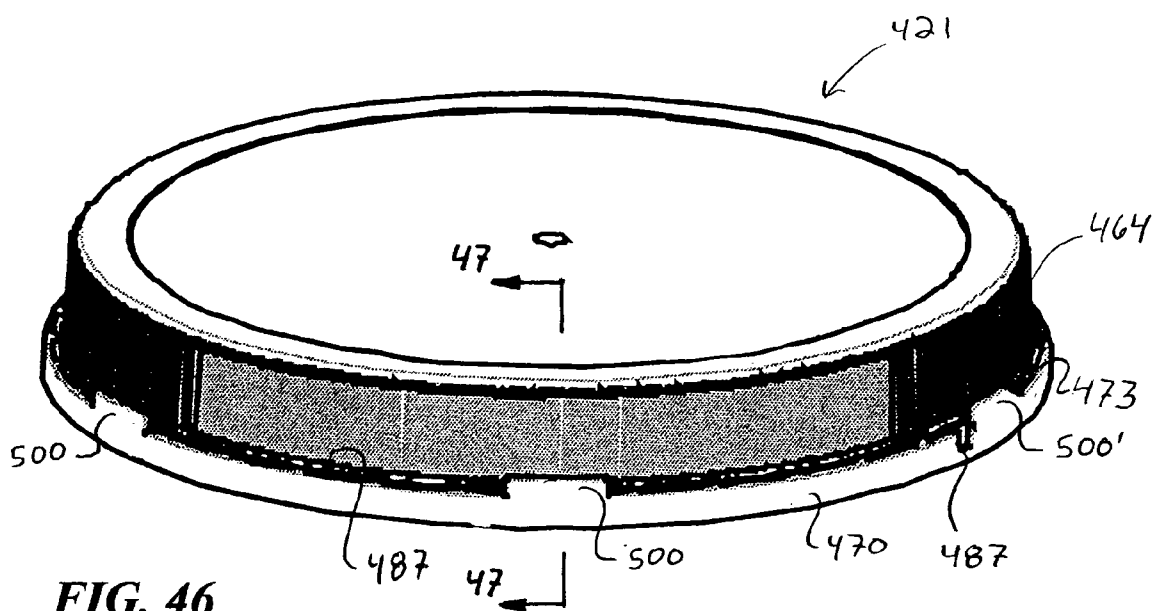


**FIG. 44**



**FIG. 45**





**TAMPER-EVIDENT CAP AND CONTAINER NECK****CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/668,780 filed Sep. 22, 2003, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/210,716, filed Jul. 30, 2002 and now U.S. Pat. No. 6,637,611, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/746,882 filed Dec. 22, 2000 and now U.S. Pat. No. 6,439,412, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/356,063 filed Jul. 19, 1999 and now U.S. Pat. No. 6,173,853, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/071,625 filed May 1, 1998 and now U.S. Pat. No. 5,975,321, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/781,453, filed Jan. 10, 1997 and now U.S. Pat. No. 5,755,348, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/456,741 filed Jun. 1, 1995 and now abandoned, which is a divisional of Ser. No. 08/029,177 filed Mar. 10, 1993 and now U.S. Pat. No. 5,456,376, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 07/830,133 filed Jan. 31, 1992 and now U.S. Pat. No. 5,267,661, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 07/772,945 filed Oct. 8, 1991 and now U.S. Pat. No. 5,213,224, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 07/565,638 filed Aug. 9, 1990 and now U.S. Pat. No. 5,190,178, the entire contents of which is incorporated herein by reference.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION****[0002] 1. Field of the Invention**

[0003] This invention relates to a new and improved container closure and container neck structure and more particularly to a structure wherein the closure is applied with a single one-dimensional axial downward force onto the neck and is held in such position by a tamper-evident band. The consumer destroys a frangible connection between the cap and the band during initial removal, preferably by tearing away the band enabling the closure to be unscrewed from the container neck. When the cap is used for reclosure purposes, it may be screwed on and screwed off in the same manner as screw caps have heretofore been used.

**[0004] 2. Description of Related Art**

[0005] Prior snap-on, screw-off structures may be classified under either of the following categories: (1) Those with thread engagement as initially applied; and (2) Those without.

[0006] The major advantages of the no-thread initial engagement systems are that they are conceptually simple, careful alignment of the closure and the container is not necessary upon application of the closure, and easy (low force) application is possible since no thread-jumping is required. This version can be an aesthetically pleasing, straight wall cap design, and good re-seal is achieved on reclosure because of the torque advantage of threads. On the other hand, the disadvantages of such a system are that it may be confusing to the consumer because initial removal is merely by lifting the cap off the neck but subsequent use requires twisting the cap relative to the neck. Further, it is difficult to use the system with a lined closure because of the height relationships between the finish and the cap, and

finally the cap must be relatively tall, which forces the use of fine threads, which can be difficult to mold. None of these disadvantages are present in this invention.

[0007] A closure such as Crisci U.S. Pat. No. 4,561,553 has a number of problems. The tamper evident feature of the closure may be circumvented by being able to engage the threads of the neck and closure (thereby creating a mechanical advantage) and back off the cap while the tamper-evident band is intact. Secondly, the device is confusing to the consumer since the cap is screwed off during removal only by inwardly distorting the cap skirt. The cap is reapplied as a standard snap cap.

[0008] Full thread engagement as the cap is initially applied has a number of conceptual advantages. Consumer confusion is eliminated since initial removal is by unscrewing. A number of seal systems, including foil, full liner, plugs or other linerless seals can be used. However, full engagement systems heretofore have been difficult to achieve in practice. A disadvantage of a closure such as Carr U.S. Pat. No. 4,625,875 is that there is no practical, consistent means to orient the cap relative to the container so that, after application, the cap must be turned at least slightly to ensure a tight seal. This defeats the purpose of a push-on cap. Also, the use of a stretch snap-band tamper evident ring excessively increases the application force necessary to seat the cap.

[0009] The present invention provides full thread engagement by reason of unique thread design and, more particularly, a unique tamper-evident band (i.e., lower skirt portion) attached to the upper part of the cap by multiple bridges or by means of a continuous line of weakness between the cap and tear band, as well as a means of orienting closure and bottle threads to achieve registration prior to straight axial application.

[0010] The present invention has considerable advantages over prior structures for the reasons above noted, among others.

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0011] The present invention comprises an improved closure or cap and an improved neck finish. The cap skirt and neck are provided with mating threads of such shape that the cap may be applied in a simple downward vertical movement, the cap skirt and neck flexing sufficiently to permit the threads to slip past each other.

[0012] The threads may be continuous or interrupted. Also, instead of there being two threads—one on the neck and one on the cap, one external thread may be replaced with a groove. The term “helical engagement means” is sometimes used herein to encompass all such screw retention means.

[0013] The cap has a tamper-evident tear band below the skirt which is connected to the skirt by a plurality of bridges or by a continuous line of weakness. Ratchet teeth are positioned on the inside of the tamper evident band. Correspondingly, the container neck below the threads is formed with external ratchet teeth. The mating ratchet teeth of the cap and container neck are engaged by the initial downward movement of the cap relative to the neck. In other words, in order to engage the ratchet teeth it is not necessary to rotate the cap relative to the neck, thereby differing from conven-

tional threaded tamper-evident caps. It is merely necessary to provide alignment means on the cap and on the container so that the cap is initially properly oriented in such position that a direct single vertically downward movement of the cap relative to the neck causes the threads to slip relative to each other and the ratchet teeth to lock in final position. Chamfers on the ratchet structure of either closure or container can be used as a "fine" orientation system as the closure is initially applied.

**[0014]** To achieve proper registration of threads when a simple direct axial application force is used, both the neck threads and closure threads must be oriented. Orientation of the container is relatively easy. Generally, containers are either non-circular or have non-circular features which may be used for proper orientation. In accordance with a preferred form of the invention shown herein, the closure has a downward projecting tab similar to the tear tab used on push-on tear-off closures. The vertical tear tab characteristic of the present closure is an excellent orientation feature. However, other means for orienting the cap and container may be used.

**[0015]** Thread design is another feature of the invention. A large number of threads per inch of axial height is desirable for two reasons. First, a fine thread may be used and such a thread does not have to be as deep as a coarse thread, and hence the forces required for threads to jump during application are minimized. Secondly, fine threads minimize the height required to achieve a standard design criterion of 360° or more of thread engagement which permits a lighter closure weight.

**[0016]** The greater the number of thread leads, the less actual turning action is required to remove or reapply the cap. In addition, multiple thread leads promote more "squareness" during straight axial application. In other words, the cap seats horizontally on the neck because the termini of the threads are statically balanced. However, additional leads require a higher thread pitch assuming constant threads per inch and excessively high thread pitch results in a situation where the closure may back off or unscrew itself from sealed position.

**[0017]** In accordance with the present invention, a preferred thread for a blow-molded, high density polyethylene bottle is 12 threads per inch and two leads. If bottle finish processing permits, it would be advantageous to design for higher threads per inch and more leads. For example, if the bottle is made with injection blow mold equipment, a very fine bottle thread is possible. In that case, it might be preferable to use, for example, a 16 thread-per-inch, 4 lead, 4 pitch thread. The more leads, the more squarely the cap sets on the neck and the more effectively the closure will be seated by a direct downward, axial application force.

**[0018]** Also, consumer advantages of quick release and reapplication can be achieved with multiple lead threads.

**[0019]** In order to provide a tamper-evident feature, the closure should not be removable without some apparent closure characteristic changing. Generally, this requirement is satisfied by incorporating a frangible section which is destroyed during initial closure removal. One type of frangible section is a continuous thinned tear line, but in a cap of the present invention, such a system may not be the best choice, although permissible and is disclosed as a modifi-

cation of the first embodiment of the invention. A preferred tamper-evident feature provides a frangible section having a number of frangible connections or bridges between the closure skirt and a tamper-evident ring below the bottom edge of the skirt. The preferred approach is to incorporate enough bridges around the circumference such that the combined strength of the bridges prevents unscrewing. The tamper evident band must be removed to allow unscrewing. Sequential breaking of the many bridges around the circumference simulates a continuous tear. A second approach is to incorporate only a few bridges around the circumference of the skirt such that the combined strength of the bridges is not sufficient to prevent unscrewing and the bridges rupture as the cap is initially unscrewed. With this second approach the broken bridges give evidence of opening. A major advantage of using bridges rather than a continuous tear strip is that a wide range of material choices is possible. Therefore a multiple bridge simulated tear structure is generally preferred over continuous tear frangible sections and this approach is used in the preferred embodiments of the present invention. However, in a modification of the invention an uninterrupted horizontal shoulder between the upper and lower portions of the cap is used, which shoulder is formed with a line of weakness. The alternative modification eliminates the space between the bridges to create a continuous frangible line. This modification is used successfully only when the cap is formed of a low density polyethylene and is not successfully used with higher density plastic materials. One of the advantages of the elimination of the spaced bridges is that of cleanliness in that the continuous shoulder prevents dirt and liquids from contacting any portion of the neck surface above the bottom edge of the cap.

**[0020]** In a preferred embodiment of the invention hereinafter described in detail, the closure is first oriented by means of its tear tab and the containers are likewise oriented. The closure and bottle are snapped together and the orientation allows registration of both the threads and the ratchets which hold the cap in place until the tamper-evident band is removed. Seal of the container may be made with a liner, foil or a linerless feature such as a plug or flap. Before initial removal, the multiple bridges are collectively sufficiently strong to prevent unscrewing and also resist any tendency of the closure to back off the neck. During initial removal, in the preferred embodiment the tear band is removed through sequential breaking of the bridges, thereby simulating a continuous tear strip but allowing the use of such plastic materials as polypropylene and high density polyethylene. Once the tear band is removed, the system functions as with normal threaded closures. Alternatively the upper and lower portions of the cap skirt are connected by a reduced number of angularly spaced bridges. Merely by twisting the upper skirt portion the bridges may be severed, giving evidence of tampering, and making it possible to unscrew the cap.

**[0021]** One of the features of the present invention is that the lower skirt portion, which includes tamper-evident features and, more particularly, contains ratchet teeth mating with corresponding teeth on the container neck, is formed with a vertical line of weakness and a tear tab adjacent thereto. When the lower skirt is removed it tears along the vertical line of weakness as well as along the line of weakness between the upper part of the cap and the lower skirt (i.e., tamper-evident band.) This feature has a number of advantages:

[0022] First, it prevents defeating the tamper-evident feature. Were it not for the vertical line of weakness, a dishonest patron might unscrew the upper cap, remove the contents of the container and replace the cap. It is somewhat difficult to observe that the line of weakness between the upper cap and tamper-evident band has been severed. When the vertical line of weakness is severed, this is not a problem since the lower skirt cannot be replaced.

[0023] Second, if the molds for the cap are not perfectly supported, plastic material may fill some or all of the voids between bridges joining the upper cap to the tamper-evident band. This makes it difficult for some users to remove the tamper-evident band. The vertical line of weakness makes it much easier to remove the lower skirt or band. Indeed, the bridges between the upper cap and band may be made thicker or some of the voids between bridges may be eliminated.

[0024] Thirdly, the intact tamper-evident band may create a danger to wildlife if the head of a bird, fish or small animal is entrapped therein. Splitting the band along the vertical line of weakness eliminates this hazard.

[0025] A further feature of the invention is the fact that the cap ratchet lug on the interior of the lower cap skirt is located between two external lugs on the neck finish when the cap is applied so that on application the cap cannot rotate outside of its "tolerance range", that is, there is an orientation feature of the cap and bottle ratchets for proper engagement.

[0026] Another advantage of the invention is that the cap may be applied to the neck in two stages (i.e., "double click"). When the container is filled with milk or certain other liquids, entrapped air or other gases tend to cause foam. The thread structure of the present invention makes it possible to press the cap down until one set of threads passes the other. This holds the cap on the neck and holds it properly aligned relative to the neck ratchet. However, the cap is not tight and hence air and gas may escape. Then the cap is pressed down once more to tightly engaged and sealed position. To insure two "clicks" the closure thread has to jump two neck threads during application. This means that if the cap threads extend a full 360° around the cap skirt inner wall (180° each for double lead threads), the finish threads have to be repetitive at some point of the circumference. This also means that either the cap threads or the finish thread must be repetitive vertically. I.e., the threads must overlap on either the neck or cap in order to make possible the double click.

[0027] More specifically, the caps pass down a conveyor overlying the path of the containers and as each container passes the end of the conveyor, a cap drops onto the neck. The cap and neck then pass under a roller which preliminarily presses the cap down on the neck. One of the features of the thread construction of the present invention is that there is more than one full turn of thread engagement of the threads. Hence, the roller pushing the cap through the first step or snap prevents the latter from falling off the neck when it is subjected to such action as milk foaming in the interior of the container. Hence the cap stays on the bottle, although not being tightly sealed thereto, until the bottle passes under the conventional capping machine belt or pressure plate which fully seats the cap on the neck. This is a second step or snap of the cap on the bottle and insures that both threads are tightly engaged.

[0028] When the first snap of the cap on the bottle occurs, the ratchet teeth of the cap engage the ratchet teeth of the neck but a slight twisting is possible within the range of tolerance of approximately 20°. Such a rotation of the cap relative to the neck changes the height of the cap only about 0.009 inches. However, this turning ability of the cap relative to the neck with such slight changes in the height of the cap relative to the neck insures proper final alignment of the ratchet teeth of the cap and neck, while permitting release of foam or excess air.

[0029] Still another feature of the invention is an internal shoulder at the intersection of the underside of the disk and the top of the upper cap skirt. This shoulder prevents the cap from being turned or torqued to jump threads or strip the threads. The inner plug of the cap tends to push the neck of the bottle outward against the shoulder and the shoulder then prevents turning or stripping. Further, the fit of the shoulder against the neck tends to reduce leakage and rigidifies the cap.

[0030] Another feature of the present invention is that the cap is provided with a plug or inner skirt which fits inside the bottle neck. The length of this plug is related to the positioning of the screw threads on the cap in such manner that the threads of the cap and bottle neck engage before the plug engages the neck. Thus a quarter-turn of each of the double lead threads occurs before the plug contacts the neck. This feature reduces the possibility of cross-threading when the cap is applied to the neck as a reclosure cap.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0031] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and form a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention:

[0032] FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of a cap and neck before assembly, the cap being partially broken away in section to reveal internal construction.

[0033] FIG. 2 is a bottom plan of the cap.

[0034] FIG. 3 is a fragmentary enlarged top plan of the cap.

[0035] FIGS. 4 and 5 are, respectively, enlarged, fragmentary sectional views taken along lines 4-4 and 5-5 of FIG. 2.

[0036] FIG. 6 is a top plan of the neck.

[0037] FIGS. 7 and 8 are, respectively, enlarged fragmentary sectional views taken along lines 7-7 and 8-8 of

[0038] FIG. 9 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view through an assembled cap and neck taken in the positions of line 4-4 of FIGS. 2 and 7-7 of FIG. 6.

[0039] FIG. 10 is a view similar to FIG. 9 taken in the positions of line 5-5 of FIGS. 2 and 8-8 of FIG. 6.

[0040] FIG. 10A is a view similar to FIG. 10 of a modification.

[0041] FIGS. 11A, 11B and 11C are schematic views showing progressive "double click" cap attachment wherein the cap thread has one turn and the neck has multiple threads.

[0042] FIGS. 12A, 12B and 12C are views similar to FIGS. 11A, 11B and 11C wherein the neck thread has on turn and the cap thread multiple turns.

[0043] FIG. 13 is a bottom plan view of a cap.

[0044] FIG. 14 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view of a cap taken along line 14-14 of FIG. 13.

[0045] FIG. 15 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view of a cap taken along line 15-15 of FIG. 13.

[0046] FIG. 16 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view taken along line 16-16 of FIG. 15.

[0047] FIG. 17 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view of a cap applied to a neck.

[0048] FIG. 17A is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view of a cap applied to a neck.

[0049] FIG. 18 is a fragmentary, top plan view of a container.

[0050] FIG. 19 is a fragmentary, bottom plan view of another embodiment of a cap.

[0051] FIG. 20 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view taken along line 20-20 of FIG. 19.

[0052] FIG. 21 is an enlarged, fragmentary side elevational view of an alternative embodiment of a cap, shown partly in cross section.

[0053] FIG. 22 is an enlarged, fragmentary side elevational view of an alternative embodiment of a neck.

[0054] FIG. 23 is a fragmentary, top plan view showing the cap applied to a container.

[0055] FIG. 24 is an enlarged, fragmentary side elevational view of another embodiment of a cap.

[0056] FIG. 25 is a top plan view of a cap applied to a container.

[0057] FIG. 26 is a fragmentary plan view of a capping machine, showing a cap positioned within the chute.

[0058] FIG. 27 is a partial top plan view of a capping machine, showing a container positioned on the conveyor belt.

[0059] FIG. 28 is a side elevational view of another embodiment of a neck.

[0060] FIG. 29 is a top plan view of the neck of FIG. 28.

[0061] FIG. 30 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view taken along line 30-30 of FIG. 29.

[0062] FIG. 31 is a bottom plan view of another embodiment of a cap.

[0063] FIG. 32 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view taken along line 32-32 of FIG. 19.

[0064] FIG. 33 is view similar to FIG. 32 of another embodiment of a cap.

[0065] FIG. 34 is a perspective view of a cap showing possible upward deformation of the lower skirt portion to the cap.

[0066] FIG. 35 is a side elevational view of a cap and neck before assembly, the cap being partially broken away in section to reveal internal construction.

[0067] FIG. 36 is a fragmentary enlarged bottom plan of the cap.

[0068] FIG. 37 is a fragmentary enlarged top plan of the cap.

[0069] FIG. 38 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view taken along line 38-38 of FIG. 37.

[0070] FIG. 39 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional views taken along line 39-39 of FIG. 37.

[0071] FIG. 40 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view taken along line 40-40 of FIG. 35, showing a preferred cross-sectional shape of a line of weakness.

[0072] FIG. 41 is a fragmentary enlarged top plan of an alternative embodiment of a cap of the present invention.

[0073] FIG. 42 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view taken along line 42-42 of FIG. 41.

[0074] FIG. 43 is an enlarged top view of another alternative embodiment of a cap of the present invention.

[0075] FIG. 44 is a side elevational view of the cap of FIG. 43.

[0076] FIG. 45 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along line 45-45 of FIG. 43.

[0077] FIG. 46 is perspective view of another cap of the present invention.

[0078] FIG. 47 is a sectional view of the cap of FIG. 46 mounted on a container neck taken substantially along line 47-47.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0079] Reference will now be made in detail to the preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. While the invention will be described in conjunction with the preferred embodiments, it will be understood that they are not intended to limit the invention to those embodiments. On the contrary, the invention is intended to cover alternatives, modifications and equivalents, which may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

[0080] Cap 21, hereinafter described in detail, is used with a container neck 22. Neck 22 has a central neck opening 23 and extending outwardly thereof a downward-outward slanted lip flange 24 which terminates in a vertical stretch 28. The exterior of neck 22 is hereinafter described. The interior thereof forms no part of the present invention. With a blow-molded bottle finish as illustrated in FIGS. 7 and 8, the interior contour of the neck generally tends to follow that of the exterior. However, it will be understood that other types of bottles may be used and in such instances the internal neck shape may vary from that of the exterior.

[0081] Extending outward of stretch 28 are threads 29. In the depicted embodiment of FIGS. 7 and 8 there are two threads 29 designated 29a and 29b. In the embodiment, the finish has twelve threads per inch with a double lead, each

thread being six pitch and extending slightly in excess of 360° of a full thread. Thus the upper terminus 31 of the first thread is vertically displaced approximately 0.166 inch from the lower terminus 32 thereof. The upper terminus 33 of the second thread is displaced 180° relative to terminus 31 and its lower terminus 34 is approximately diametrically opposite terminus 32. It is understood that the threads can be extended greater than 360° to achieve increased thread engagement. Also, additional thread leads and different linear thread density (threads per inch) are permitted and may be advantageously chosen. In order to permit the threads of the cap to slip past the threads of the neck, as shown in FIG. 7, the upper flank 36 of thread 29 slants downwardly and outwardly at approximately 45° while the lower flank 37 slants downwardly and inwardly at an angle of about 10°. Preferably the thread apex 38 is made with as large a radius as possible. A portion 41 of vertical stretch 28 is located below the threads 29 extending down to upper shoulder 42, which is horizontal.

[0082] As stated previously, instead of threads on the inside of the skirt and outside of the neck, one thread may be replaced by a groove. Further, instead of threads 29 being continuous, they may be interrupted.

[0083] Below shoulder 42 is locking area wall 46 which slants downward/outward at an angle of about 10°. Wall 46 terminates in lower shoulder 47 which is also approximately horizontal. Outwardly of and below shoulder 47 is a lower vertical stretch 48 which at its lower end merges with the container. Bumper ring segments 49 (here shown as four in number) may be formed in the stretch 48 to facilitate gripping the container during filling and loading and also to provide certain vertical flexibility to the neck during the capping operation.

[0084] On opposite sides of neck 22 projecting out from wall 46 are teeth 51. As illustrated in FIG. 6, there are typically three such teeth on one side of the container neck and three teeth on the opposite side. The total extent of the three teeth on each side is approximately 90°. Each tooth has a top surface 52 which can be co-planar with the surface of shoulder 42. Outer surface 53 slants downward/outward at an angle of approximately 10°, terminating in shoulder 47. The front edges 54 viewed from above in plan as in FIG. 6 (assuming a right-hand thread) are disposed at varying angles from about 45° to about 0° relative to a radial line drawn perpendicular to the vertical axis and are approximately vertical.

[0085] A preferred cap 21 used with the neck structure 22 previously described is illustrated in FIGS. 1 to 5. The cap has a generally flat top disk 61 from the periphery of which depends substantially vertical short upper skirt 62. The lower edge of skirt 62 merges with slanted stretch 63, which, in turn, merges with vertical stretch 64. An internal shoulder 65 is formed at the intersection of stretches 62 and 63. Members 62, 63, 64 have vertical ribs 66 spaced therearound to enable the user to grip the cap. Chamfers 67 are preferably formed on the upper edges of ribs 66. The ribs of the cap are thus, in effect, rounded but extend higher. Hence they are more severely gripped by the user when screwing or unscrewing the cap.

[0086] On the interior of skirt 66 are formed threads 71a and 71b which are selected to mate with threads 29a and 29b of neck 22. The bottom edge 72 of skirt 64 is connected to

shoulder 73 and generally downwardly/outwardly slanted lower skirt 74 by a plurality of bridges 76 which in fact constitute the lower edges of ribs 66. The bridges and voids therebetween are sometimes referred to herein as “horizontal lines of weakness”. Skirt 74 has a generally horizontal lower edge 77.

[0087] Teeth 81 spaced and dimensioned to match the teeth 51 of neck 22 are formed on the inside of wall 74. The inner edges 82 of the teeth are positioned close to inner surface 46 after cap application. The leading edge 83 of each tooth 81 is formed at an angle of approximately 45° to a radial line, thereby ensuring good interlock with the complementary surface 54 of neck 22. This angular relationship biases the cap 21 into a more secure locking arrangement with the neck 22.

[0088] Tear tab 86 extends downwardly from lower edge 77 and an upper side edge thereof merges with a weakened vertically extending line 87 formed in skirt 74. Use of weakened line 87 is optional, but preferably used to prevent the ring-like skirt 74 being a hazard to wildlife and to accomplish the other objects set forth earlier in this description. When the consumer grips tab 86, bridges 76 are severed and the vertical weakened line 87 is broken. Thus pulling the tab 86 sequentially fractures weakened line 87 and then each of the bridges 76 (i.e., the horizontal weakened line). Removal of the lower skirt 74 removes the ratchet teeth 81 and hence frees the upper portion of the cap so that it can be unscrewed. However, such removal of the lower skirt gives evidence of the opening of the cap and hence is a tamper-evident feature. Alternatively, the user may twist upper skirt 64, severing bridges 76. To prevent defeating the tamper-evident features of the cap, the bridges may be made stronger. A combination of circumferentially spaced thin bridges 76 and arcuate continuous areas relieved by circular arc tear lines may be used.

[0089] Although various liners may be used to secure the under side of disk 61 to the lip flange 24 of neck 22, in the accompanying drawings, a preferred embodiment shows an inner skirt or plug 91 extending downward from top disk 61 and fitting inside the neck opening 23. Preferably the outer bottom edge of skirt 91 is formed with a bevel 92 to facilitate seating of the cap 21 on the neck 22. A circular rib 94 on the underside of disk 61 is located between plug 91 and skirt 62 and engages neck lip flange 24 to provide a secondary seal.

[0090] The threads 71a, 71b of cap 21 are double lead and each extends around the circumference of the cap in excess of 180°, i.e., approximately 200°. The threads 71a, 71b originate very close to the bottom edge 72 of vertical stretch 64. Threads 29a and 29b of the neck 22 originate spaced somewhat downwardly from the top on vertical stretch 28. As has previously been stated in the summary of this invention, in conventional capping machines, cap 21 is deposited on neck 22. Because of the fact that the threads 71b and 71a are diametrically opposed, the cap 21 tends to rest on the neck 22 approximately horizontally. The first step in seating cap 21 is to pass under a roller which pushes the cap 21 downwardly. The threads on the cap slip over the uppermost threads on the neck 22 during this first step which may be termed a “first snap”. At this point the cap is not fully seated, still resting at least one bottle thread above its fully seated and applied position. If the container has been filled with a substance such as milk which tends to foam, the first

snap action permits some of the air in the container to escape since the cap is not completely sealed on the neck. Thereafter, the cap and container pass under a seating belt or pressure plate which forces the cap **21** downward until it is completely seated on the neck **22**, thereby completing the second snap or step. To achieve this advantageous "double snap application" the relative axial movement of cap and bottle neck to a fully sealed and seated position must involve a portion of the cap threads jumping at least two neck threads or vice versa.

[0091] The first step in the seating of the cap on the neck (first snap) brings the teeth **81** of the cap into partial engagement with the teeth **51** of the neck, but within about a 20° tolerance. This permits the aforementioned foaming without allowing cap rotation away from proper orientation. The second step of the seating causes the teeth **81** and **51** to fully interengage.

[0092] Another feature of the invention best shown in FIG. 9 is the function of the shoulder **65** of cap **21**. The inner plug **91** tends to push the lip **24** outwardly. Hence the shoulder **65** tightly engages the surface **28** and promotes effective sealing.

[0093] Directing attention now to FIG. 10A, instead of bridges **76** being formed connecting the shoulder **73a** to the lower end of vertical stretch **64a**, the shoulder **73a** is continued inward but the material is very thin. In other words, a horizontal line of weakness **97** replaces the bridges **76** but the line of weakness is continuous. Hence the lower skirt **74a** may be removed by tearing away the line of weakness **97**.

[0094] The use of the modification of FIG. 10A is particularly suited when the cap is made of a material such as low density polyethylene. An advantage of having a line of weakness rather than separated bridges is that dirt and water cannot enter in the voids between the bridges and collect between the cap and neck.

[0095] In other respects the modification of FIG. 10A resembles that of the preceding modification and the same reference numeral followed by the subscript a is used to designate corresponding elements.

[0096] Preferred Operation I

[0097] After the container has been filled, it is transported through a capping machine. As is well understood in the bottling art, and in a manner similar to that whereby push-on, pull-off caps are applied, the caps **21** are fed one at a time out of a bowl in the capping machine along a conveyor, the tear tabs **86** orienting the caps so that they are all discharged in a pre-determined orientation relative to the containers which pass therebelow. Although not shown in the accompanying drawings, each container has a square cross-section or some other variation from a round shape which permits the container neck **22** to be oriented relative to the cap **21**. The structure of capping machines is well known in the bottling art. Because of the relative orientation of the cap **21** and container neck **22**, the teeth **81** of the cap are in vertical alignment with the gaps between teeth **51** of neck **22**. An axially downward force is applied to cap **21** causing it to move down. As it moves down, the inner skirt **91** fits inside neck opening **23**. The threads **71a** and **71b** slip over the threads **29a** and **29b**, the slanted surfaces **36** facilitating such movement. As has been stated, the sealing is preferably in

two steps or snap actions. The cap **21** is sufficiently resilient so that it expands outward sufficiently to permit the threads to slip. As the cap **21** seats on the neck **22**, the teeth **81** engage between the teeth **51** to fully seat the teeth **81** in place. Flange **24** then engages the under side of disk **61** and the outer wall of inner skirt **91**, sealing the container. The engagement of threads **71** and **29** retain the cap tightly to the neck.

[0098] FIGS. 11A, 11B and 11C illustrate schematically the two-step seating heretofore described. In FIG. 11A the single turn cap thread **71b** rests on the top of the uppermost neck thread. In FIG. 11B the thread **71b** of the cap has been pushed over neck thread **29a** but the cap is not fully seated. Hence gases may escape from the container. In FIG. 11C the second click occurs, when thread **71b** seats under thread **29b**.

[0099] FIG. 12A shows a reverse situation wherein thread **29a** on the neck rests under the cap thread **71b**. In FIG. 12B the first click has occurred and thread **29a** is between threads **71a** and **71b**. FIG. 12C shows completion of seating wherein thread **29a** is above threads **71a** and **71b**.

[0100] After the cap **21** has been fully seated on neck **22** it cannot be removed without giving evidence of tampering. Thus the interengagement of teeth **81** and **51** prevent unscrewing the cap and the interengagement of threads **71** with threads **29** prevents lifting the cap off the neck.

[0101] When it is desired to open the container, the user grips the tab **86** and breaks line **87**, then pulls circumferentially around the container causing the lower skirt **74** to be removed, thereby removing the teeth **81**. This gives evidence of tampering. However, it also permits the user to grip the ribs **66** and unscrew the cap **21** from neck **22**.

[0102] To replace the cap, it is merely necessary to reverse the direction of turning. Directing attention now to the structure shown in FIG. 1, another feature of the relationship between the plug **91** and threads **71a**, **71b** is shown. It is desirable that when the portion of the cap **21** above the lower skirt **74** is used as a reclosure cap, that proper seating of the reclosure cap be insured so that the reclosed bottle does not leak. In FIG. 1 the reference letter X is used to designate the vertical distance between the upper edge of threads **71a** and **71b** and the point at which the flange **24** of neck **22** contacts the slanted surface **92** of plug **91**. The reference letter Y is used to designate the minimum vertical dimension between the top edge of vertical stretch **28** of neck **22** and the underside of the thread start **31**. A feature of the structure is that at some position of the cap the dimension X be greater than the dimension Y. Hence when the reclosure cap is placed on the container neck, the threads interengage, preferably a quarter-turn or more before the upper edge of the container neck engages the inner skirt or plug. This prevents cross-threading or stripping of the threads when the reclosure cap is tightened on the neck.

[0103] As used in the claims, the term "thread" is used not only to include external threads but internal ones as well and to include continuous and interrupted threads or other "helical engagement means". In the specification and claims, the cumulative turn total for multi-lead threads or other such helical engagement means is the sum total of the number of turns of the individual multi-lead threads around either the neck stretch portion or the upper skirt portion. For multi-lead

threads, “in excess of one turn total” means that the sum total of the number of turns of the individual threads is in excess of 360°. The language “at least one vertically extending arc stretch” refers to a portion of the upper skirt or neck stretch where the threads overlap or are repetitive vertically, whereby a vertical line drawn within the arc stretch will intersect at least two threads. When the threads on either the cap or the neck overlap (i.e. a vertical line drawn within the arc stretch will traverse the helical engagement means at least two times), the application of the cap onto the container with at least two “clicks” is ensured.

[0104] Closure 121, hereinafter described in detail, is used with a container neck 122. The interior of the neck forms no part of the present invention. With a blow-molded bottle finish, the interior contour tends to follow that of the neck exterior. However, it will be understood that other types of bottles may be used, with the internal shape of the neck varying from that of the exterior.

[0105] Neck 122 has a central opening 123 and a downward-outward slanted lip flange 124 terminating in an upper neck stretch 128. Threads 129 extend outward of stretch 128. In the illustrated embodiment, there are two threads 129a and 129b. The finish has twelve threads per inch with a double lead, each thread being six pitch and extending slightly in excess of 360° of a full thread. It is to be understood that the threads may be extended greater than 360° for increased thread engagement. Additionally, the thread leads may be of a different linear thread density (threads per inch). The upper flank 136 of thread 129 slants downwardly/outwardly at approximately 45° while the lower flank 137 slants downwardly/inwardly at approximately 10°, permitting the threads on the interior of the cap to slip past the threads on the neck finish. Preferably, the thread apex 138 is made with as large a radius as possible, but being sufficient to insure that the cap must be unscrewed and not pulled from the neck.

[0106] Instead of cooperatively shaped threads on the upper neck stretch and the inner surface of the closure, one thread may be replaced by a groove. Further, threads 129 may be interrupted, instead of being continuous.

[0107] The container neck includes a tamper-evidencing portion 40 below the upper neck stretch 128 which includes an outward extending shoulder 142, a locking wall 146 offset outwardly relative to the upper neck stretch 128, and a lower outward extending shoulder 147. A plurality of upward projecting teeth 151 are formed on the tamper-evidencing portion of the neck. A vertical stretch 148 depends from shoulder 147. To facilitate gripping the container during filling and loading, vertical stretch 148 may be formed with a number of bumper ring segments 149 (here shown as four in number).

[0108] The teeth 151 extend upwardly from the shoulder stretch 147. The teeth are shaped and positioned to cooperate with internal teeth formed on the closure, the interengagement between the teeth resisting unscrewing of the cap from the neck. Typically, multiple teeth 151 (FIG. 18) are formed on either side of neck 122, with the total extent of the multiple teeth being approximately 90°.

[0109] A cap for use with neck structure 122 is illustrated in FIGS. 13 to 17. The cap has a top 160 from the periphery of which depends downward extending upper skirt 161. As

illustrated, the top comprises a generally flat top disk; however, other configurations may be substituted. The upper skirt 161 is formed with a generally vertical upper edge 162 which merges with outward-downward slanted stretch 163, which in turn merges with vertical stretch 164. An internal shoulder 165 is formed at the intersection of stretches 162 and 163. A sealing bead 168 depends from the underside of top 160. When the cap 121 seats on the neck, bead 168 engages lip flange 124, internal shoulder 165 engages the upper edge of vertical stretch 128 and inner skirt or plug 191 engages lip flange 124, substantially sealing the container. Members 162, 163 and 164 have radially spaced vertical ribs 166 to enable the user to grip the cap.

[0110] As is shown in FIG. 17A, the internal shoulder 165 provides an inward projecting portion 161a of the upper skirt 161 which cooperates with the exterior of the neck stretch 128. Since the circumference of the upper portion 128a of neck stretch 128 is greater than the interior circumference of the cap 121 at the inward projecting portion 161a of the skirt, a tight fit is formed between the inward projecting portion and the neck stretch exterior. The tight fit between the upper skirt portion above thread 171a and the exterior of the neck stretch 128 above thread 129a promotes an effective seal between the exterior of the plug 191 and the interior edge 124a of the lip 124. When the cap 121 is applied to the neck 122, the upper skirt 161 is biased outward as the inward projecting portion 161a engages the exterior of the neck stretch 128. Since the closure is resilient, the inner plug 191 of the cap is urged toward the lip 124 to form a seal between the generally seamless interior edge 124a of the lip and exterior of the plug 191. In other words, the inward projecting portion provides a means for biasing the upper skirt and the plug outward to urge the plug into sealing engagement with the lip 124. The fit of the shoulder against the neck tends to reduce leakage and rigidify the cap, preventing the cap from being turned or torqued to jump threads or strip the threads. The inner plug 191 of the cap 121 tends to push the neck of the bottle outward against the shoulder and the shoulder then prevents turning or stripping.

[0111] Threads 171a and 171b, which are selected to mate with threads 129 of neck 122, are formed on the interior of the skirt. The shape of threads 129a, 129b, 171a, and 171b allow the threads to slip past one another and then interengage. In the presently described embodiment, threads 171a and 171b are double lead and each extend around the circumference of the cap in excess of 180°, for example, approximately 200°. In conventional capping machines, cap 121 is deposited on neck 122. Since threads 171a, 171b are diametrically opposed, the cap tends to rest horizontally on neck 122, facilitating the application of the cap onto the neck with a downward, axial force.

[0112] In order for the closure and container threads to effectively slip past each other during direct axial application it is necessary that the threads be finer than would be appropriate for a threaded closure applied by conventional rotary application. As threads become finer, a greater amount of total thread engagement is often necessary to prevent excessive forward stripping on reapplication. For the present embodiment, which includes a linear density of twelve threads per inch and is formed with double leads, a thread engagement of approximately 200° for each of the two cap threads is satisfactory (i.e. 400° of total thread engagement).



Finer threads such as sixteen or twenty threads per inch would require greater total thread engagement.

[0113] The closure includes a tamper-evidencing band **170** below the upper skirt portion **161** provided with a plurality of internal ratchet teeth **181**. In the present embodiment, the tamper-evidencing band **170** comprises an annular shoulder **173** below the upper skirt **161** and an outer skirt portion **174** extending downwardly from the shoulder **173**. The band **170** is joined to the upper skirt **161** by a frangible section which allows the band **170** to be at least partially torn from the cap. The frangible section includes a number of radially spaced bridges **176** interconnecting the shoulder **173** and the upper skirt portion, the bridges being provided by the lower edges of ribs **166**. Alternatively, the frangible section may be provided by a line of weakness formed along the intersection of shoulder **173** and upper skirt **161**. In the illustrated embodiment, the shoulder **173** and outer skirt portion **174** divide the band into two sections, with the outer skirt portion being oriented at an angle relative to the annular shoulder. In a modified embodiment, discussed in relation to **FIG. 24**, the tamper-evidencing band may comprise a single, curved section which extends generally outward and downward from the upper skirt portion. The tamper-evidencing band may also take many other forms.

[0114] The tamper-evidencing band includes a plurality of the internal ratchet teeth **181** depending from the shoulder **173**. The generally downwardly depending teeth **181** are positioned to engage teeth **151** when cap **121** is pushed onto neck **122**. Teeth **181** include an inclined surface **183** for facilitating the application of the cap to neck **122** and a working surface **184** which cooperates with the working surface of one of the teeth **151** on the neck to resist unscrewing of the closure. As the closure is moved downwardly on the neck, the inclined surface **183** slides along tooth **151** to thereby guide tooth **181** to a position between adjacent ones of teeth **151**. The downward depending tooth **181** is retained between the teeth **151**, with the interengagement between the teeth **151** and **181** securing cap **121** on the neck so long as the tamper-evidencing band **170** is intact. Teeth **181** are located on the shoulder in the present embodiment; however, the teeth may alternatively be positioned at other locations on the tamper-evidencing band **170**, such as along the inner surface of outer skirt portion **174**.

[0115] The interlocking engagement between the teeth on the cap with those on the neck prevents twisting of the cap relative to the container while the tamper-evidencing band **170** is intact. To remove the closure from the neck, the band **170** is at least partially removed from the upper skirt **161** to disengage teeth **181** from the teeth **151** on the neck. The separation of the tamper-evidencing band **170** from the upper skirt **161** is accomplished by rupturing the bridges **176**. The ruptured bridges warn the consumer that the container has been opened and the contents tampered with.

[0116] A tear tab **186** is connected to the lower edge of the tamper-evidencing band **170**. In the present embodiment, the tear tab provides means for removing the lower band and may additionally be used to orient cap **121** relative to the container prior to application if desired. The tamper-evidencing band **170** is formed with a line of weakness adjacent tab **186**, generally indicated by **187**, extending through outer skirt portion **174** and shoulder **173** of the band. The line of weakness facilitates removal of the band **170** from the

closure, and is another tamper-evidencing feature of the present invention. When initially opening the container, the consumer pulls tab **186** to remove lower band **170**, rupturing line **187** and frangible section **176**. The absence of the band **170** more dramatically alerts the consumer to possible tampering with the contents. An inattentive consumer may fail to notice the fractured bridges, therefore the removal of the tamper-evidencing band is a more obvious indication of tampering. In the preferred form, completely removing lower band **170** from upper skirt **161** aesthetically enhances the appearance of cap **121**, which is used to reseal the container. However, in other forms of the present invention the lower band may be only partially removed from the upper skirt portion for separating teeth **151** from teeth **181** to unscrew the cap from the container.

[0117] When a consumer desires to initially open the container, he grips tab **186** and pulls circumferentially around the container detaching lower band **170** from upper skirt **161**. Ratchet teeth **181** are thereby removed from interlocking engagement with upward projecting teeth **151**, enabling the consumer to unscrew cap **121** from neck **122** and providing evidence that the container has been opened. To replace the cap, the consumer merely reverses the direction of twisting.

[0118] A modification of the cap is shown in **FIGS. 19 and 20**. The modified cap **121c** may be applied to a container having a neck configuration similar to that shown in **FIG. 18**. The cap **121c** includes a tamper-evidencing band **170c** which includes a number of downward depending teeth **181c**. The shoulder **173c** of the band extends horizontally outward from the lower edge of upper skirt portion **161c**, and the outer skirt portion **174c** depends from the shoulder. A frangible section composed of a plurality of circumferentially spaced bridges **176c** connects shoulder **173c** to the lower edge of upper skirt **161c**. The teeth **181c** are dimensioned and positioned to engage the upwardly extending teeth **151** formed on the neck. To facilitate application of cap **121c**, teeth **181c** include a beveled inner surface **183c**. When pushing the closure onto the neck, inner surface **183c** directs the teeth **181c** into interengagement with teeth **151**. The working surface **184c** engages the working surface of one of the teeth **151** on the neck to resist unscrewing of the cap **121c** from the neck.

[0119] Teeth **181c** and teeth **151** cooperate to restrain unscrewing of cap **121c** relative to the neck while the lower skirt remains intact. To unscrew the cap, lower band **170c** is removed from upper skirt portion **161c** by rupturing frangible bridges **176c**. The modified cap may include a tear tab and a line of weakness extending through the lower skirt, as described with reference to the previously discussed embodiment for facilitating removal of tamper-evidencing band **170c**. Alternatively, cap **121c** may be twisted, fracturing the bridges, and unscrewed from the container with lower band **170c** remaining around neck **122**. The use of a tear tab and line of weakness is preferred, as it provides a clearer and more obvious indication of tampering, facilitates recycling of the container and substantially eliminates risk of injury to wildlife.

[0120] An alternative modification of the cap **121d** and neck **122d** of the present invention is shown in **FIGS. 21 to 23**. Neck **122d** is formed with several teeth **151d** circumferentially spaced along shoulder stretch **147d**. A pair of

adjacent teeth **151d** are separated by a space, generally designated **152**, formed for receiving the teeth of the closure. When the closure is applied to the neck, a tooth formed on the closure is positioned within space **152** between the adjacent teeth **151d**, thereby preventing rotation of the closure relative to the neck.

[0121] Cap **121d** (FIG. 21) includes a domed top **160d** having an inner skirt **191d** depending from the underside of the domed top. Inner skirt **191d** engages lip flange **124d** when the cap seats on the neck, forming an internal seal between the cap and the neck. In this embodiment, the lower band portion **170d** comprises a number of teeth **181d** generally depending from lower edge **68** of upper skirt **61d**. The tamper-evidencing means are provided by the teeth **181d**. The teeth **181d** are shaped and positioned for interengaging teeth **151d**, with one tooth **181d** slipping into space **52** as the cap **121d** is applied to neck **122d**. The teeth **181d** have an inclined surface **83d** which slides along the tooth **151d** to position the tooth **181d** in the space **52**. The working surface **84d** of the tooth engages the tooth **151d** on the neck to resist unscrewing of the cap **121d** relative to the neck **122d**. The interengagement between teeth **151d** and teeth **181d** substantially restricts twisting of the closure relative to the neck, preventing unscrewing of the cap with the tamper-evidencing structure intact.

[0122] To remove cap **121d** from neck **122d**, the band **170d**, which is formed with the downward depending teeth **181d**, must be severed from upper skirt portion **161d**. As is shown in FIG. 21, a line of weakness **179** extends about the circumference of the closure between the upper skirt portion **161d** and the band **170d**. To open the container for the first time, the band **170d** is torn away at the line of weakness, facilitating unscrewing of the closure. Removal of the band **170d** is facilitated by a tear tab which is gripped while initiating a continuing tearing away of the lower skirt portion. As is shown in FIG. 23, one of the downward extending teeth **181d** may be extended to provide a tear tab. When the cap is applied to the neck, the tear tab is deformed outward by depressed section **143** of shoulder stretch **147d**. The consumer grips the tear tab shown in FIG. 23 and removes the lower band portion **170d** to separate the interengaged teeth **151d** and **181d** and open the container.

[0123] Another modification of a cap **121e** of the present invention is shown in FIG. 24. The cap **121e** may be used with a neck of the type shown in FIG. 18. The cap **121e** includes an upper skirt **161e** having a generally vertical portion **164e** and a lower band portion **170e**. The lower band **170e** extends generally outward and downward from the lower edge of vertical portion **164e**, and is formed with a curved section **180**. A number of internal teeth **181e** are formed on the interior of the curved section **180** of the lower band. A frangible section, provided in the present embodiment by a line of weakness **176e**, joins the lower band **170e** to the upper skirt portion **161e**. A tear tab **186e** depends from the lower band **170e**. When the cap **121e** is applied to the neck **122**, threads **171e** slip past and interengage threads **129**. Curved section **180** slips over outward extending shoulder **142** and lower neck portion **146**, with the teeth **181e** being shaped and positioned to interengage teeth **151**. As with the previously described modifications, to open the container the consumer pulls tab **186e**, fractures the line of weakness **176e** and separates the lower band from the upper skirt, disengaging teeth **181e** from teeth **151**.

[0124] Turning to FIG. 25, cap **121** is shown seated on container **125**. With the present invention, the closure may be conveniently oriented relative to the container prior to applying the closure to the neck. The tab **186** and the non-circular cross section of the container are directed by the capping machine during the capping process to align the cap and container relative to one another, positioning teeth **151** and **181** for direct interengagement when the cap is pushed onto the neck. However, the cap construction of the previous embodiments fosters substantial seating of the cap without prior orientation. For example, the locking means of the closure and neck are cooperatively shaped to slip past one another, thereby guiding the teeth **181** formed on the closure into interengagement with the teeth **151** formed on the neck. By first orienting the cap, full thread engagement may be achieved once the cap is pushed onto the neck. However, it is to be understood that in many instances, full thread engagement or complete interengagement of the teeth **151** and **181** is not necessary to securely retain the cap on the container. The various features of the present invention are not to be restricted to a snap-on, screw-off closure system in which the cap and container are first oriented relative to one another.

[0125] FIGS. 28-32 illustrate another embodiment of a neck **122f** and cap **121f** in accordance with the present invention. The neck **122f** includes multiple threads **129f** on the upper neck stretch **128f**. As shown in FIG. 29, the neck **122f** includes seven threads **129f** although it is to be understood that a greater number of threads may be employed if desired. In this embodiment, the thread finish has a linear thread density of more than 17 threads per inch, for example 17.5 threads per inch, and each thread extends more than 200°, for example 215°, around the circumference of the upper neck stretch **128f**. The thread density and length of each thread are also subject to variation within the scope of this invention.

[0126] A plurality of teeth **151f** are formed on the locking wall **146f** of the neck **122f**. As shown particularly in FIG. 20, the teeth **151f** include a working surface **154** and a trailing surface **155**. The working surface **154** engages the working surface of a tooth on the cap to resist unscrewing of the cap relative to the neck. The trailing surface **155** joins the outer edge of the working surface **154** of one tooth **151f** to the inner edge of the working surface **154** of the adjacent tooth as shown in FIG. 29. In other modifications of the invention, the teeth **151f** may be spaced apart so that the trailing surface **155** ends at the locking wall **146f** and is not joined to the adjacent tooth. The trailing edges **155** allow the cap **121f** to be twisted slightly, usually no more than about 50°, to fully seat the cap on the neck after the cap has been substantially applied by pushing the cap in an axial direction onto the neck.

[0127] As shown particularly in FIGS. 28 and 30, each tooth **151f** includes a bevel **156** at the upper edge of the tooth **151f**. The bevels **156** slant downwardly and outwardly to guide the cap teeth **181f** into side-by-side interengagement with the teeth **15f**. In the embodiment of FIGS. 28-30, the bevel **156** is inclined at an angle of about 40° to 50°, such as 45°, relative to a horizontal plane. However, a bevel of an angle in the range of 10° to 70° may be employed.

[0128] The cap **121f** is shown in FIGS. 31 and 32. The cap **121f** includes multiple threads **171f** on the interior of the

upper skirt **161f** which mate with the multiple threads **129f** on the upper neck stretch **128f**. In the illustrated embodiment, the cap **121f** includes seven threads each having a length of about 180°, and the thread finish has a linear thread density of more than 17 threads per inch, such as 17.5 threads per inch. As with threads **129f**, it is to be understood that the number of threads, the length of the individual threads, and the linear thread density is subject to considerable variation within the scope of the present invention.

[0129] A plurality of teeth **181** are provided on the interior of the tamper-evidencing band **170f**. In the illustrated embodiment, teeth **181f** are formed around the entire circumference of the band **170f**, however in other embodiments the teeth **181f** may be arranged in groups spaced around the interior of the band **170f**. The teeth **181f** have a working surface **184f** and a trailing surface **185**. The working surface **184f** cooperates with the working surface **154** of the teeth **151f** on the neck to resist unscrewing of the cap **121f** from the neck **122f**, while the trailing surface **185** joins the outer edge of the working surface **184f** to either the inner edge of the working surface **184f** of an adjacent tooth or ends at the inner wall of the band **170f**. When the cap **121f** is moved downwardly onto the neck **122f** in an axial direction, the lower edge of some of the teeth **181f** contact the bevel **156** on the teeth **151f**, which guides the teeth **181f** into side-by-side engagement with the teeth **151f**.

[0130] In this embodiment shown in FIGS. 31 and 32, the downward slope of the working surface **184f** and the trailing surface **185** follows the slope of the band **170f**. In this instance, both the band **170f** and the surfaces **184f** and **185** are substantially vertical corresponding to the substantially vertical orientation of the locking wall **146f**. However, the band **170f** may also be slanted downwardly and outwardly as shown for example by the band **170** in FIGS. 1-5. The bottom or lower edge of the teeth **181f** of the embodiment shown in FIGS. 31-32 is substantially horizontal. When the neck **122f** is used with the cap **121f**, the bevels **156** provide the primary means for guiding the teeth **151f** and the teeth **181f** into interengagement. The neck **122f** may also be used with other caps such as a cap **121g** shown in FIG. 33. The teeth **181g** of the cap **121g** have a bevel or inclined surface **183g** which is slanted in a downward-outward direction. The bevel **183g** cooperates with the bevel **156** to guide the teeth **151f** and **181g** into side-by-side interengagement. The neck **122f** may also be used with caps of the type shown in FIGS. 13-18 and FIGS. 19-20, modified to include threads matching the thread pattern on the neck **121f**.

[0131] Except as set forth above, the modifications of FIGS. 19-20, 21-23, 24, 28-32 and 33 resemble those of the preceding modifications and the same reference numerals followed by the subscripts c-g, respectively, are used to designate corresponding parts.

#### [0132] Preferred Operation II

[0133] After the container has been filled, it is transported through a capping machine. The structure of capping machines is well known in the bottling art. As is well understood in the art, and in a manner similar to that whereby push-on, pull-off caps are applied, caps **121** are fed one at a time out of a bowl **111** in the capping machine along a chute **112** (FIG. 26). One type of chute **112** is formed with a slot **113** between parallel rails **114**, with tear tab **186** orienting the caps for uniform discharge in a pre-determined

orientation relative to the containers passing therebelow by fitting into the space **113** between the rails **114**. Chutes without slots may be used when the tab does not depend from the lower edge of the tamper-evidencing band or when the cap is not oriented relative to the neck before it is applied.

[0134] When orientation is employed, each container **125** preferably has a non-circular cross section or some other variation from a round shape, such as the rectangular shape shown in FIG. 25, which permits the container to be oriented relative to cap **121**. The container **125** travels along a conveyor belt **116** below the capping machine (FIG. 27). Guide rails **117** adjacent the conveyor belt **116** directionally align the non-circular cross section of the container **125** relative to the tear tab **186** of the cap. Using the slot **113** between the parallel rails **114** and the guide rails **117**, the cap **121** and neck **122** may be conveniently oriented relative to one another by the conventional capping machine and conveyor belt system.

[0135] As is well known in the art, the container passes below the chute and picks up a cap **121** such that the cap is resting on the neck **122**. If orientation is employed, the threads **129** and **181** are in vertical alignment, ensuring full thread engagement. Otherwise, the orientation of the cap relative to the neck is random. An axially downward force is applied to the cap, pushing the cap onto the neck without externally imposed relative rotation of the cap and container. Threads **171a** and **171b** slip over threads **129a** and **129b**, the slanted surfaces **136** facilitating such movement. The cap is sufficiently resilient so that it expands outward to permit the threads to slip. As cap **121** seats on the neck, teeth **181** fall behind teeth **151**, providing interengagement between teeth **151** and teeth **181**. The inclined surfaces **183** of teeth **181** and/or bevels **156** of teeth **151f** guide the teeth **181** and **151f** into interengagement. After the cap has been fully seated on neck **122**, it may not be removed without providing evidence of tampering. The interengagement between teeth **151** and **181** prevent unscrewing of the cap from the container, while the interengagement between the threads prevents lifting of cap **121** off neck **122**.

[0136] In another embodiment of the present invention illustrated in FIG. 34, closure **221**, hereinafter described in detail, is used with a container neck **222**. Neck **222** has a central opening **223** and a downward-outward slanted lip flange **224** terminating in a vertical stretch **228**. Threads **229** extend outward of stretch **228**. In the illustrated embodiment, there are two threads **229a** and **229b**. The finish has twelve threads per inch with a double lead, each thread being six pitch and extending slightly in excess of 360° of a full thread. It is to be understood that the threads may be extended greater than 360° for increased thread engagement. Additionally, the thread leads may be of a different linear thread density (threads per inch). The upper flank **236** of thread **229** slants downwardly/outwardly at approximately 45° while the lower flank slants downwardly/inwardly at approximately 10°, permitting the threads on the interior of the cap to slip past the threads on the neck finish. Preferably, the thread apex **238** is made with as large a radius as possible.

[0137] Instead of cooperatively shaped threads on the upper neck stretch portion and the inner surface of the closure, one thread may be replaced by a groove. Further, threads **229** may be interrupted, instead of continuous.

[0138] Below the vertical stretch is downward extending locking wall portion 240. The locking wall portion has a shoulder stretch portion 242 and a lower neck stretch portion 246 offset outwardly relative to the upper neck stretch portion. In the illustrated embodiment, the lower neck portion slants downwardly/outwardly at an angle of approximately 10° and terminates in generally horizontal shoulder 247. A vertical stretch 248 depends from shoulder 247. To facilitate gripping of the container during filling and loading, vertical stretch 248 may be formed with a number of bumper ring segments 249 (here shown as four in number).

[0139] A number of ratchet teeth 251 project from lower stretch 246 on opposite sides of neck 222. Typically, three teeth 251 are formed on either side of neck 222, with the total extent of the three teeth being approximately 90°. The teeth 251 are shaped to interengage the internal ratchet teeth formed on the cap, preventing twisting of the cap relative to the neck. In the illustrated embodiment, teeth 251 are formed on lower stretch 246. However, in alternative forms of the present invention the teeth may be located on shoulder stretch 242, interengaging ratchet teeth formed on the shoulder of the cap, as is discussed below.

[0140] A cap for use with neck structure 222 is illustrated in FIG. 35 to FIG. 40. The cap has top 261 from the periphery of which depends downward extending upper skirt 262. As illustrated, the top comprises a generally flat top disk; however, other configurations may be substituted. The upper edge of upper skirt 262 merges with slanted stretch 263, which in turn merges with upper skirt portion or vertical stretch 264. An internal shoulder 265 is formed at the intersection of stretches 262 and 263. Members 262, 263 and 264 have radially spaced vertical ribs 266 to enable the user to grip the cap.

[0141] Threads 271a and 271b, which are selected to mate with threads 229 of neck 222, are formed on the interior of the skirt. The shape of threads 229a, 229b, 71a and 71b allow the threads to slip passed one another and then interengage. Threads 271a and 271b are double lead and extend around the circumference of the cap in excess of 180°, for example, approximately 200°. In conventional capping machines, cap 221 is deposited on neck 222. Since threads 271a, 271b are diametrically opposed, the cap tends to rest horizontally on neck 222, facilitating the application of the cap onto the neck with a downward, axial force.

[0142] The closure has ring-like skirt or lower skirt portion 270 below upper skirt portion 264. The lower skirt comprises outer skirt portion 274 offset outwardly relative to upper skirt portion 264 and a shoulder 273 extending inwardly from the upper edge of the outer skirt portion. A frangible section including a number of radially spaced bridges 276 interconnects the shoulder and the upper skirt portion. In the illustrated embodiment, the lower edges of ribs 266 form the bridges. Alternatively, a line of weakness may be formed through the intersection of shoulder 273 and upper skirt 264.

[0143] A number of internal ratchet teeth 281 spaced and dimensioned to match the teeth 251 of neck 222 are formed on outer skirt portion 274. Teeth 281 are positioned to engage teeth 251 when cap 221 is pushed onto neck 222. After cap application, the inner edges 282 of teeth 281 are positioned close to lower stretch 246. The interlocking engagement between the teeth on the cap with those on the

neck prevent twisting of the cap relative to the container while the lower skirt is intact. Teeth 281 are located on the outer skirt in the present embodiment; however, the teeth may alternatively be positioned along the inner surface of shoulder 273. The teeth formed on the shoulder surface would be shaped and positioned to interengage teeth located on the shoulder stretch of neck 222. When the closure is applied to the neck, the ratchet teeth on the opposing surfaces of shoulder 273 and shoulder stretch 42 interlock, preventing removal of the cap so long as the line of weakness is not broken.

[0144] The interengagement between ratchet teeth 251 and 281 prevent twisting of the cap relative to the neck. To remove the closure, the lower skirt must first be separated from the upper skirt, as by rupturing of the frangible section, allowing the cap to be unscrewed from the container. The ruptured bridges warn the consumer that the container has been opened and the contents tampered with. Thus, the interlocking ratchet teeth and frangible bridges of the present invention are a tamper-evident features of the present invention.

[0145] In the preferred embodiment, a tear tab 286 is connected to the lower edge of outer skirt 274. The tear tab provides means for removing the lower skirt, and may be used to orient cap 221 relative to the container. Lower skirt 270 is formed with a line of weakness generally indicated by 287 extending through outer skirt 274 and shoulder 273. The line of weakness facilitates removal of the lower skirt from the closure, and is another tamper-evident feature of the present invention. When initially opening the container, the consumer pulls tab 286 to remove lower skirt 270, rupturing line 287 and frangible section 276. The absence of the lower skirt more dramatically alerts the consumer to possible tampering of the contents. A distracted consumer may fail to notice the fractured bridges, therefore the removal of the lower skirt is a more obvious indication of tampering.

[0146] It has been contended that the tamper-evident features of the closure which has been described up to this point may be circumvented by curling the lower skirt 270 in an upward direction. A cap having a partially deformed lower skirt is shown in FIG. 34. With the lower skirt completely deformed upward, teeth 251 and 281 will no longer interengage, and cap 221 may be twisted relative to the container for removal. In practice, this manipulation of the closure will usually fracture bridges 276. However, as discussed, the ruptured bridges may not be readily apparent to the distracted consumer.

[0147] To further safeguard the consumer from the dangers of tampering, a substantially vertical fin 300 is formed between upper skirt 264 and shoulder 273. In one embodiment, vertical fin 300 is located adjacent line of weakness 287, as is shown particularly in FIG. 36, FIG. 37 and FIG. 38. When a dishonest patron attempts to curl the lower skirt 270 towards the upper skirt, the deformation of the material below the vertical fin 300, generally indicated at 302, is resisted by the fin. This resistance distorts lower skirt 270, causing line of weakness 287 and frangible bridges 276 to rupture, providing evidence of tampering. Attempts by a dishonest patron to tamper with the contents of a container by curling the lower skirt to remove cap 221 will be revealed by the fracturing of frangible section 276 and line 287. Thus, vertical fin 300 provides additional protection against tampering.

[0148] In the preferred form, fin 300 is formed with a substantially vertical line of weakness 301 through the closure adjacent the upper skirt. As lower skirt 270 is torn from the closure, line of weakness 301 is ruptured and the fin removed from upper skirt 264 together with the lower skirt. The upper skirt is provided with an even, clean finish once vertical fin 300 is removed. However, if desired, the fin could be formed with a line of weakness extending through the fin adjacent shoulder 273. The fin would then remain intact on upper skirt 264 after removal of the lower skirt from the container.

[0149] In the alternative embodiment shown in FIG. 43 to FIG. 45, improved tamper evidence is achieved by a camming action of dual fins 310 upstanding from shoulder 273. In this embodiment, the fins need not be joined to upper skirt 264. If a dishonest patron attempts to curl the lower skirt to tamper with the contents of the container, dual fins 310 act as a cam to force the lower skirt radially outward, causing sufficient deformation of the lower skirt to fracture bridges 276 and line of weakness 287. A further advantage of the present embodiment is that no residual material remains on upper skirt 64 after removal of lower skirt 270.

[0150] As is illustrated particularly in FIG. 37 and FIG. 39, line of weakness 287 extending through lower skirt 270 is a continuous section of material. This configuration is preferred as it is simple to manufacture. However, an alternative embodiment having a gap 304 at the intersection of shoulder 273 and outer skirt 274 is shown in FIG. 41 and FIG. 42. Lower skirt 270 has a groove 306 extending through shoulder 273 and outer skirt 274. The shoulder is formed with a first web material 308 bridging groove 306, while the outer skirt is formed having a second web material 310 bridging the groove. The first and second web materials 308, 310 are separated by gap 304.

[0151] With the embodiments illustrated in FIG. 35 to FIG. 40 and FIG. 43 to FIG. 45, upward deformation of the lower skirt stretches the lower edge of the outer skirt, placing the corner between the shoulder and the outer skirt in compression. Removing material from the corner and forming gap 304, as in FIG. 41 and FIG. 42, increases the amount of distortion caused by curling the lower skirt, thereby facilitating the fracturing of line of weakness 287. Thus, the alternative embodiment provides an additional tamper-evident feature of the cap of the present invention.

[0152] In feeding the snap-on screw-off closure, orientation is generally achieved by causing tear tab 286 to be at the trailing edge, riding in a slot cutout of the cap feed chute. It has been observed that occasionally the lower skirt 270 of a trailing cap will ride up onto the shoulder 273 of the preceding cap directly above the tear tab 286 of the preceding cap. This causes a jam and stops the flow of caps. It is readily apparent that an additional benefit of fin 300 and dual fins 310 of the present invention is the prevention of the occurrence of jamming.

[0153] After the container has been filled, it is transported through a capping machine. As is well understood in the bottling art, and in a manner similar to that whereby push-on, snap-off caps are applied, caps 221 are fed one at a time out of a bowl in the capping machine, with tear tab 286 orienting the caps for uniform discharge in a pre-determined orientation relative to the containers passing therebelow. Although not shown in the accompanying drawings, each

container has a square cross-section or some other variation from a round shape which permits the container to be oriented relative to cap 221. The structure of capping machines is well known in the bottling art. Because of the relative orientation of cap 221 and neck 222, teeth 251 and 281 are in vertical alignment. An axially downward force is applied to the cap, pushing the cap onto the neck. Threads 271a and 271b slip over threads 229a and 229b, the slanted surfaces 236 facilitating such movement. The cap is sufficiently resilient so that it expands outward sufficiently to permit the threads to slip. As cap 221 seats on the neck, teeth 281 engage behind teeth 251 to fully engage teeth 281 in place.

[0154] After the cap has been fully seated on neck 222, it can not be removed without providing evidence of tampering. The interengagement between teeth 251 and 281 prevent unscrewing of the cap from the container, while the interengagement between the threads prevents lifting of cap 221 off neck 222. Substantially vertical fin 300 or dual fins 310 prevent upward deformation of the lower skirt without rupturing frangible bridges 276 and line of weakness 287. Thus, any attempts to tamper with the contents of the container will be revealed to the consumer.

[0155] When a consumer desires to initially open the container, he grips tab 286 and pulls circumferentially around the container causing lower skirt 270 and vertical fin 300 to be removed. Ratchet teeth 281 are thereby removed from interlocking engagement with ratchet teeth 251, providing evidence of tampering and enabling the consumer to unscrew cap 221 from neck 222. To replace the cap, the consumer merely reverses the direction of twisting.

[0156] In another embodiment shown in FIG. 46 and FIG. 47, to further safeguard the consumer from the dangers of tampering, a plurality of substantially vertical castle projections 500 are circumferentially-spaced about the upper skirt 464 extending upwardly from shoulder 473 and spaced outwardly from upper skirt 464. In the illustrated embodiment, the cap is provided with eight castle projections, however, one will appreciate that the actual number may vary. In the illustrated embodiment, one castle projection 500 is located adjacent line of weakness 487, as is shown particularly in FIG. 46 and FIG. 47. When a dishonest patron attempts to curl the lower skirt 470 towards the upper skirt, the deformation of the material below the vertical castle projection 500 is resisted by the castle projection as it abuts against upper skirt 464. This resistance distorts lower skirt 470, causing line of weakness 487 and frangible bridges 476 to rupture, providing evidence of tampering. Attempts by a dishonest patron to tamper with the contents of a container by curling the lower skirt to remove cap 421 will be revealed by the fracturing of frangible section 476 and line 487. Thus, vertical castle projection 500 provides additional protection against tampering.

[0157] In the preferred form, castle projections 500 are circumferentially spaced about the upper skirt and are spaced away from the upper skirt. One will appreciate that the spacing and height of the castle projections may vary, provided that height of the castle projections is tall enough to allow camming action in that the upper edge 505 abuts against a lower portion of upper skirt 464 as lower skirt 470 is pivoted about the frangible section 476 in the direction of arrow P in FIG. 47. Such camming action is similar to that

described above with respect to the dual vertical fins **310**. In the illustrated embodiment, the castle projection extends substantially vertically from the lower skirt portion, however, one will appreciate that the shape of the projection may vary. For example, the projection may have an outwardly tapered surface providing a right-triangular cross-section in which the angled surface is spaced outward from the upper skirt portion. The angled surface may provide a different aesthetic while the inner vertical surface still provides the camming action which encourages tamper-evidencing rupture of the frangible section. Alternatively, the castle projections may be in the form of rod-like extensions which extend upwardly from the lower skirt.

[0158] If a dishonest patron attempts to curl the lower skirt to tamper with the contents of the container, castle projections **500** act as a cam to force the lower skirt radially outward, causing sufficient deformation of the lower skirt to fracture bridges **476** and line of weakness **487**. As lower skirt **470** is torn from the closure, frangible section **476** is ruptured and the castle projections are removed from upper skirt **464** together with lower skirt **470**. A further advantage of the present embodiment is that no residual material remains on upper skirt **64** after removal of lower skirt **470**.

[0159] After the cap has been fully seated on neck **422**, it can not be removed without providing evidence of tampering. The interengagement between teeth **451** and **481** prevent unscrewing of the cap from the container, while the interengagement between the threads prevents lifting of cap **421** off neck **422**. Substantially vertical castle projection **500** prevent upward deformation of the lower skirt without rupturing frangible bridges **476** and line of weakness **487**. Thus, any attempts to tamper with the contents of the container will be revealed to the consumer.

[0160] When a consumer desires to initially open the container, he may merely grip the upper skirt **464** and twist the cap with respect to the neck to unthread the cap from the container neck. In this case, the frangible section will rupture thus allowing the cap to be unthreaded from the neck. Alternatively, the cap may be provided with a gripping tab, as discussed above, and pulls circumferentially around the container causing the lower skirt and vertical castle projections to be removed from the remainder of the cap, thereby removing the ratchet teeth of the cap from interlocking engagement with ratchet teeth of the neck, providing evidence of tampering and enabling the consumer to unscrew the cap from the neck. In either case, to replace the cap, the consumer merely reverses the direction of twisting.

[0161] The foregoing descriptions of specific embodiments of the present invention have been presented for purposes of illustration and description. They are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed, and obviously many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical application, to thereby enable others skilled in the art to best utilize the invention and various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the claims appended hereto and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A container closure for use with a container neck of the type having an upper opening, a downward extending upper neck stretch portion below said opening, said upper neck stretch portion having an exterior, at least one first helical engagement thread around said exterior of said upper neck stretch portion, a locking wall portion below said upper neck stretch portion, said locking wall portion comprising a lower neck stretch portion offset outwardly relative to said upper neck stretch portion and a first shoulder extending inwardly from said lower neck stretch portion to said upper neck stretch portion, at least one external tooth on said locking wall portion,

said closure having a top, a downward extending upper skirt portion depending from said top, at least one second helical engagement thread around said interior of said upper skirt portion shaped to mate with said at least one first helical engagement thread, a lower skirt portion below said upper skirt portion, said lower skirt portion comprising an outer skirt portion offset outwardly relative to said upper skirt portion and a second shoulder extending inwardly from said outer skirt portion to said upper skirt portion, a frangible line of weakness interconnecting said upper skirt portion and said second shoulder, at least one castle projection joined to and upstanding from said second shoulder to prevent upward deformation of said lower skirt portion without breaking said frangible line of weakness, at least one internal tooth on said lower skirt portion shaped to engage said at least one external tooth to prevent unscrewing of said closure relative to said neck without breaking said frangible line of weakness.

2. The closure of claim 1 in which said castle projection extends substantially vertically from said lower skirt portion.

3. The closure of claim 1 in which said castle projection is spaced from said upper skirt portion.

4. The closure of claim 1 in which lower skirt portion includes a plurality of said substantially vertical castle projections circumferentially spaced from said upper skirt portion.

5. The closure of claim 4 in which said lower skirt portion is formed with a substantially vertical line of weakness extending adjacent at least one of said substantially vertical castle projections adjacent said upper skirt portion, whereby said at least one substantially vertical castle projection is a tamper-evident feature of said closure.

6. The closure of claim 1 in which said at least one internal tooth is located on said outer skirt portion.

7. A container closure for use with a container neck of the type having an upper opening, a downward extending upper neck stretch portion below said opening, said upper neck stretch portion having an exterior, at least one first helical engagement thread around said exterior of said upper neck stretch portion, a locking wall portion below said upper neck stretch portion, said locking wall portion comprising a lower neck stretch portion offset outwardly relative to said upper neck stretch portion and a first shoulder extending inwardly from said lower neck stretch portion to said upper neck stretch portion, at least one external tooth on said locking wall portion,

said closure having a top, a downward extending upper skirt portion depending from said top, said upper skirt

portion having an interior, at least one second helical engagement thread around said interior of said upper skirt portion shaped to mate with said at least one first helical engagement thread, a lower skirt portion below said upper skirt portion, said lower skirt portion comprising an outer skirt portion offset outwardly relative to said upper skirt portion and a second shoulder extending inwardly from said outer skirt portion to said upper skirt portion, a frangible line of weakness interconnecting said upper skirt portion and said second shoulder, at least one substantially vertical castle projection upstanding from said second shoulder to prevent upward deformation of said lower skirt portion without breaking said frangible line of weakness, at least one internal tooth on said lower skirt portion shaped to engage said at least one external tooth to prevent unscrewing of said closure relative to said neck without breaking said frangible line of weakness,

said at least one first helical engagement thread and said at least one second helical engagement thread being shaped such that when said closure is moved directly axially downward on said neck without relative rotation

of said closure and said neck, said at least one first helical engagement thread and said at least one second helical engagement thread slip passes each other and then interengage,

said second shoulder and said outer skirt portion are formed with a line of weakness extending through said second shoulder and said outer skirt portion.

**8.** The closure of claim 7 in which said at least one substantially vertical castle projection is located adjacent said line of weakness.

**9.** The closure of claim 7 in which said line of weakness comprises a groove formed through said second shoulder and said outer skirt portion, said second shoulder formed having a first web material bridging said groove and said outer skirt portion formed having a second web material bridging said groove.

**10.** The closure of claim 9 in which said first and second web materials are separated by a gap adjacent the intersection of said second shoulder and said outer skirt portion.

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