United States Patent

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[54] **PARTITION UNIT AND METHOD OF MAKING SAME**
23 Claims, 9 Drawing Figs.

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **229/15**
[51] **Int. Cl.** **B65d 5/48, B65d 85/00**
[50] **Field of Search** ..... 229/15, 29 D, 42, 27, 28, 10, 28 BC, 115

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ABSTRACT: A one piece die-cut blank for folding into a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton. In the basic embodiment the blank comprises a central section and two side sections with cutout flaps adapted to be folded to a position spanning the central section. The basic blank may be modified to include two wing portions attached to the side sections each having flap portions, said wing portions adapted to be folded to a position in planar contiguity with said side sections and said flap portions adapted to be folded outwardly away from said side sections. A plurality of either of such blanks may be integrally attached to form a single blank for folding into a partition unit of any desired number of cells.

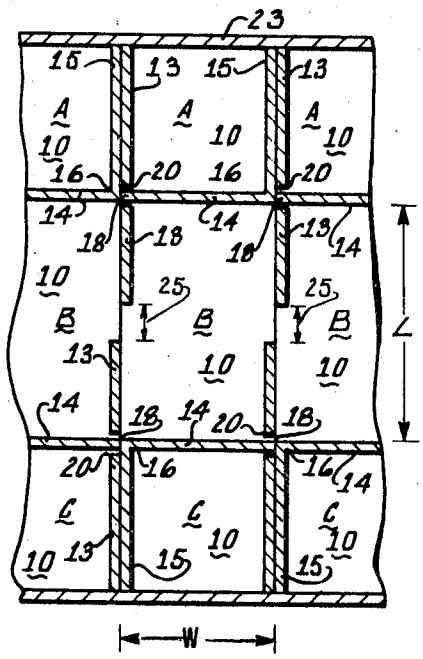


FIG. 1A

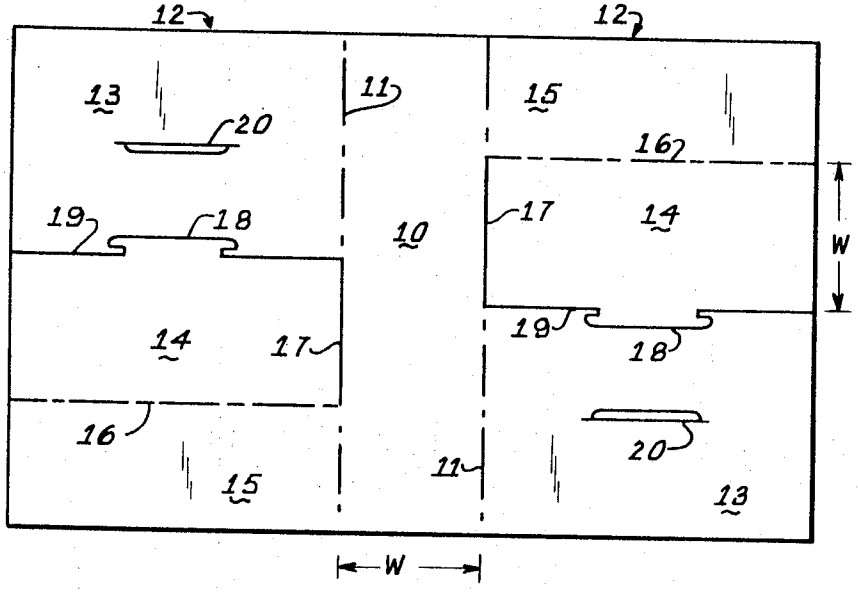


FIG. 1B

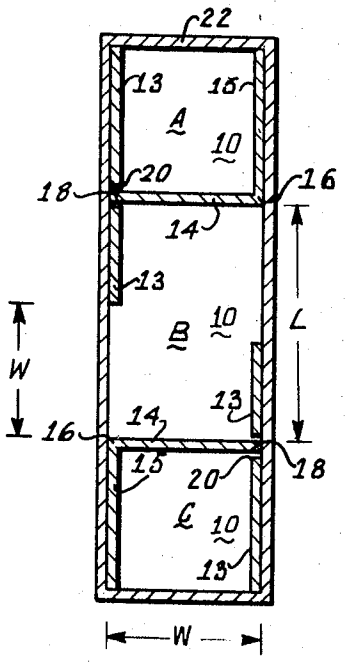
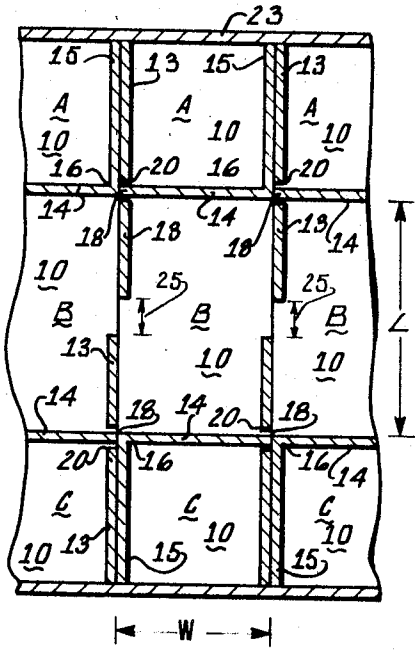


FIG. 2B



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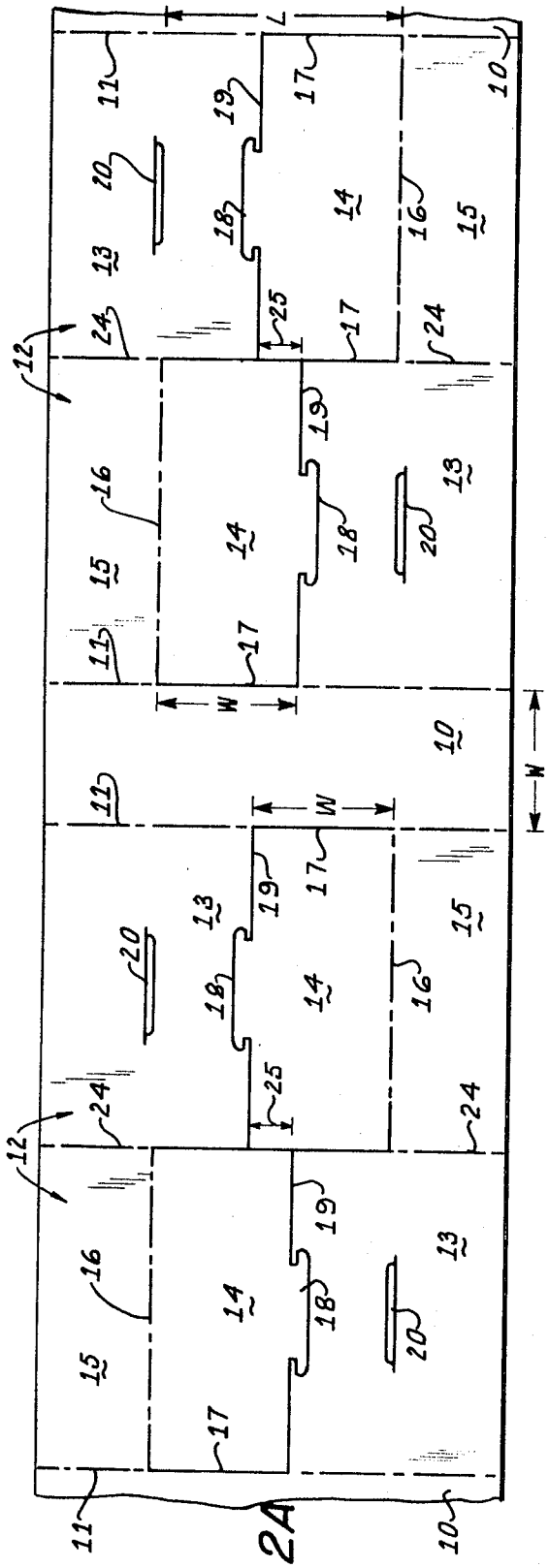


FIG. 2A

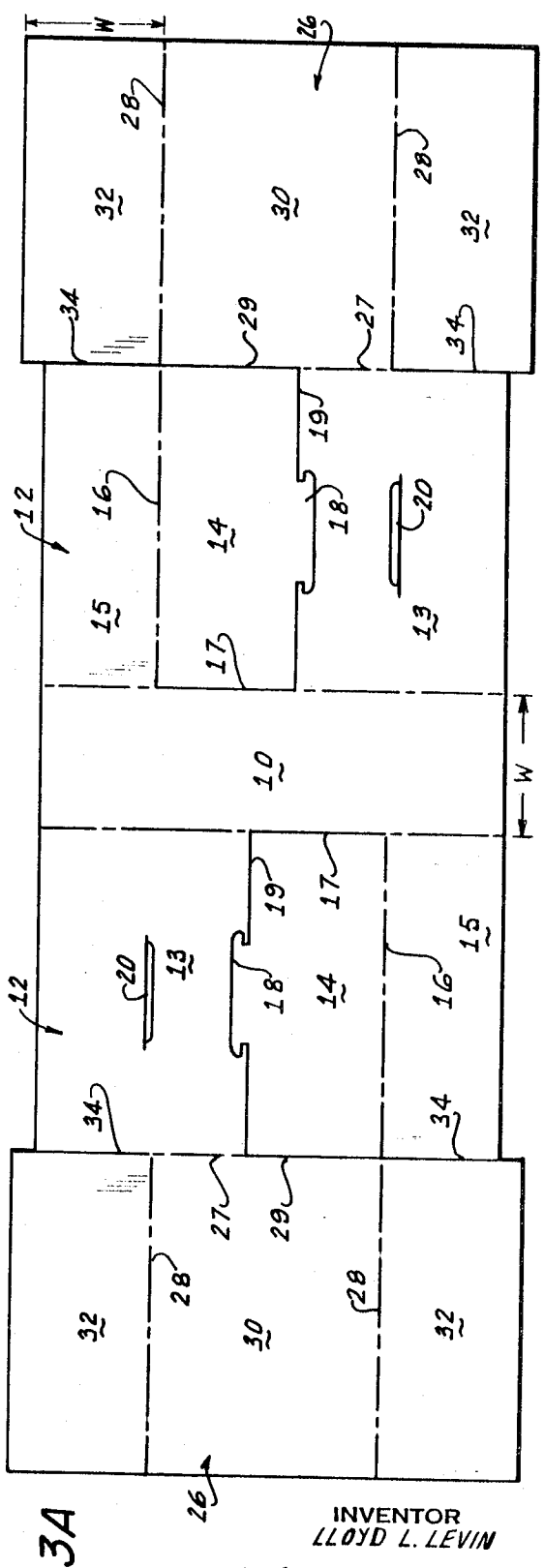


FIG. 3A

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FIG. 3C

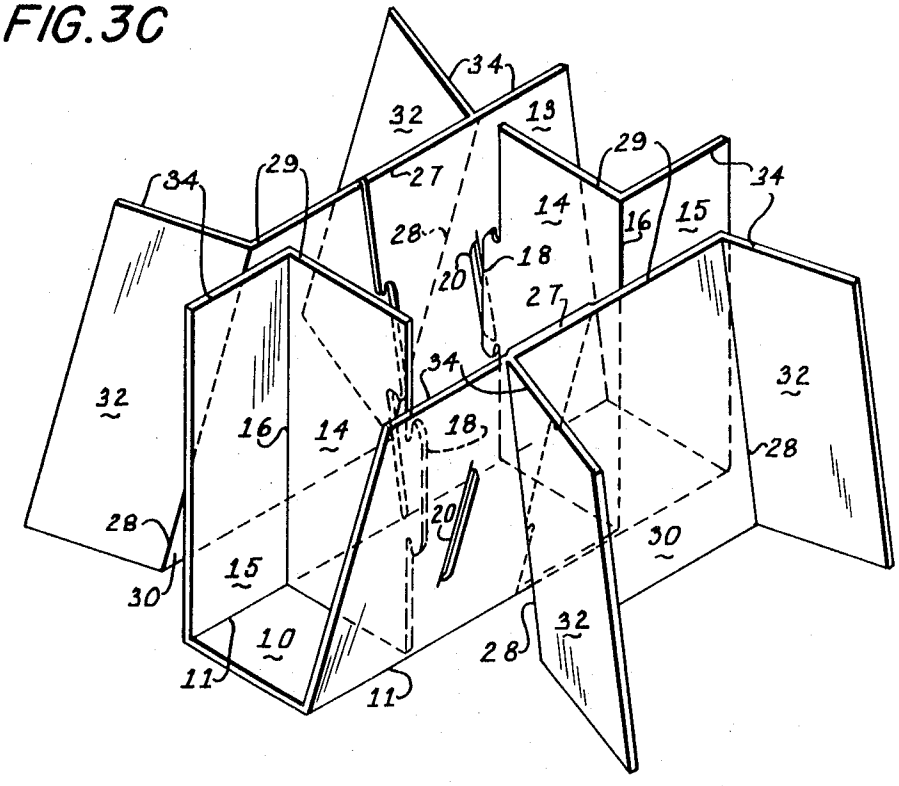
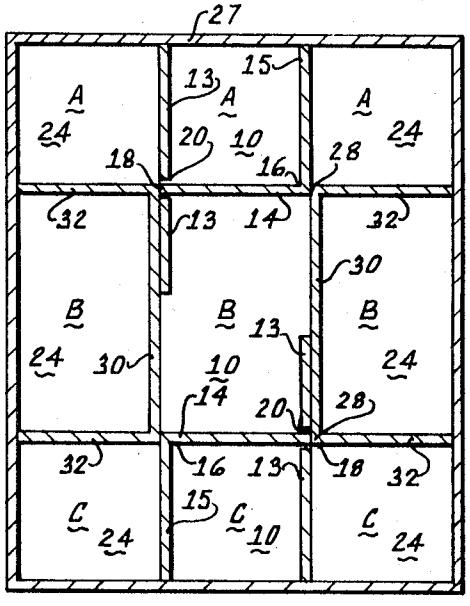


FIG. 3B



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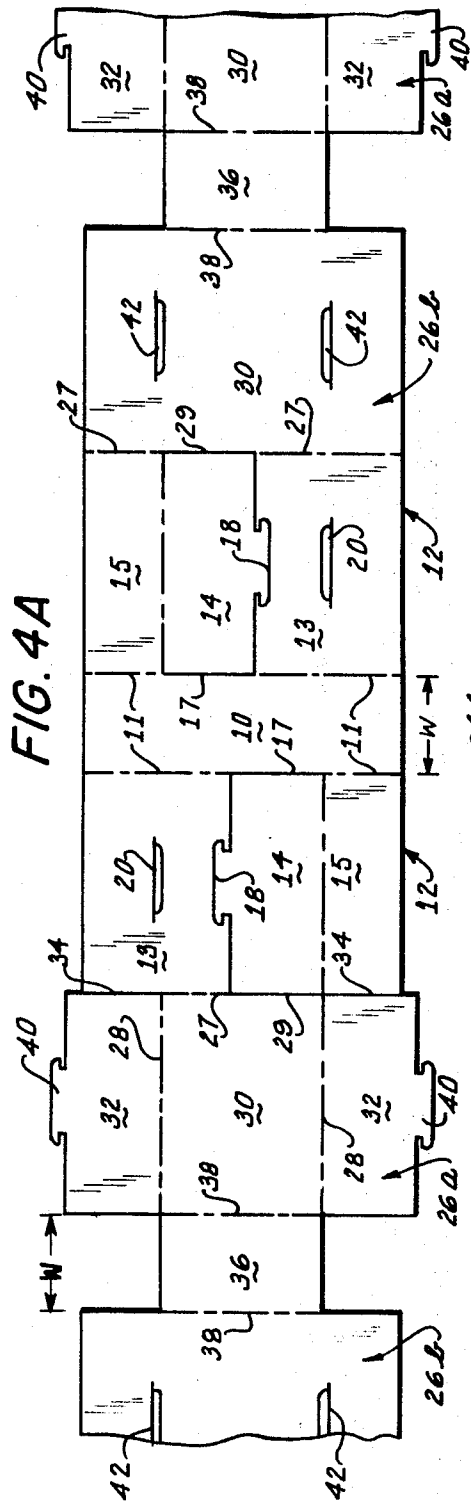


FIG. 4A

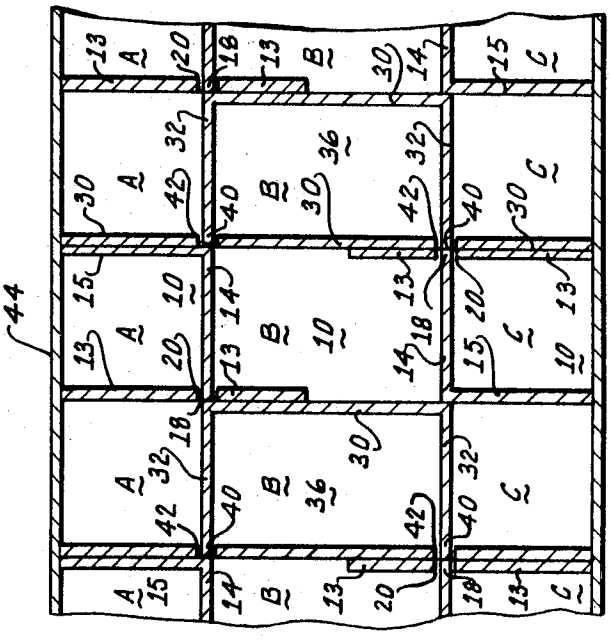


FIG. 4B

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PARTITION UNIT AND METHOD OF MAKING SAME

The present invention relates to a die-cut blank for folding into a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton.

Partition units for insertion into a container are well known in the packaging art. Partition units of the type described are most commonly used in connection with corrugated paperboard cartons for shipping or storing goods which are not suitable for sale or shipment in bulk. Such units are particularly useful in packing fragile articles or articles packaged for sale in flexible or odd-shaped containers, e.g. potato chips or pretzels.

Normally such partition units are assembled from a plurality of flat paperboard blanks connected in crisscross fashion by the registration of slots cut in each blank for accommodating blanks extending across or perpendicular thereto. Thus, to construct a nine-cell partition unit, four of such flat blanks would be needed (two spaced blanks extending in one direction and two spaced blanks extending in a perpendicular direction). These units are usually shipped to the manufacturer in preassembled form ready for insertion into the appropriate cartons.

Partition units assembled in this way have several disadvantages . A primary disadvantage is that the units tend to collapse, or change shape, after insertion in the appropriate carton. This is because the individual blanks remain, at least to some extent, slidably and hingeably movable relative to each other. Thus, some relative movement is likely to occur when the partition is inserted into the carton and when the carton is packed with the articles to be shipped. Both these operations therefore are rendered somewhat difficult when performed manually. Moreover, the propensity for relative movement makes such units ill-adapted for automatic packing operations.

A second disadvantage of partition units of this type is that the assembly operation is difficult and time consuming. The assembler must visually register the corresponding slots in crisscrossed blanks so as to insure the proper spacing of parallel blanks. It is apparent that this operation becomes more difficult as the number of blanks to be assembled into one unit increases. With labor costs continuing to rise, this time-consuming operation adds appreciably to the cost of manufacture.

Finally, partition units of this type normally must be stored before being used. Thus, preassembled units of this type take up considerable warehouse space.

It is a primary object of the present invention to design a multicell partition unit utilizing a one piece die-cut blank which may be rapidly assembled and inserted into a container of appropriate size.

It is another object of the present invention to design a multicell partition unit for insertion into a container of a rigid integral structure which will not collapse upon insertion or thereafter.

It is a further object of the present invention to design a multicell partition unit which may be assembled from a one piece die-cut blank by folding said blank along fold lines incorporated into said blank.

It is still another object of the present invention to design a one piece blank for folding into a multicell partition unit which may be easily and cheaply manufactured.

To the accomplishment of the above, the partition unit of the present invention is constructed by folding a single blank along fold lines to form the desired number of compartments or cells and securing the walls of such compartments in their relative positions by inserting a tab projecting from one section into a slot appropriately cut in an adjacent perpendicular section. The basic blank comprises a central section and two side sections adapted to be folded inwardly to form a generally U-shaped channel. Flaps cutout from each section are folded to extend across the central section to the other side section and be secured in that position by a tab and slot arrangement. The remaining embodiments are built up from this basic blank.

To the accomplishment of the above, and to such other objects as may hereinafter appear, the present invention relates

to a one piece die-cut blank for folding into a multicell partition unit for insertion into a container, as defined in the accompanying claims and as described in this specification, taken together with the accompanying drawing in which:

FIG. 1A is a plan view of the basic embodiment of the blank of the present invention;

FIG. 1B is a sectional plan view of the blank of FIG. 1A erected and inserted into a carton in accordance with this invention;

FIG. 2A is a fragmentary plan view of a blank comprising a plurality of the blanks of FIG. 1A;

FIG. 2B is a fragmentary sectional plan view of the blank of FIG. 2A erected and inserted into a carton in accordance with this invention;

FIG. 3A is a plan view of the second embodiment of a blank of the present invention;

FIG. 3B is a sectional plan view of the blank of FIG. 3A erected and inserted in a carton in accordance with this invention;

FIG. 3C is a perspective view of the blank of FIG. 3A being erected in accordance with this invention;

FIG. 4A is a fragmentary plan view of a blank comprising a plurality of the blanks of FIG. 3A connected together by connecting sections; and

FIG. 4B is a fragmentary sectional plan view of the blank of FIG. 4A erected and inserted in a carton in accordance with the present invention.

All the blanks of the present invention are formed from a sheet of paperboard or the like. As illustrated in the drawings, fold lines (which may be scored, perforated, or the like) are indicated by dotted lines and cut lines (along which adjacent portions are completely severed) are indicated by solid lines. Unless otherwise indicated, width refers to horizontal dimensions and length to vertical dimensions.

The basic blank, illustrated in FIG. 1A, comprises a rectangular sheet including a central section **10** defined by two fold lines **11**, spaced a distance W apart, on either side of which are side sections generally designated **12**. A flap **14** is cut out from each side section **12** along a cut line **17** coterminous with fold line **11** and cut line **19** generally perpendicular to fold line **11** and extending entirely across side section **12**. A fold line **16** generally parallel to cut line **19**, spaced a distance W therefrom and also extending entirely across side section **12**, defines an axis about which flap **14** is adapted to swing. Flap **14** divides each side section **12** into two portions **13** and **15** on either side thereof. A tab **18** is formed on each flap **14** extending from its outer edge defined by cut line **19**. A slot **20** is cut out from portion **13** of each side section **12** in vertical alignment with the tab **18** of the flap **14** cut out of the same side section **12** and in horizontal alignment with the fold line **16** formed on the opposite side section **12**.

The blank of FIG. 1A is erected by swinging side sections **12** around fold lines **11** upwardly and inwardly toward each other to a position in which they both extend vertically up from and generally perpendicular to central section **10**, the three aforementioned sections forming a generally U-shaped channel. Flaps **14** are swung inwardly toward the opposite side section **12** to a position generally perpendicular to side sections **12**. Since flaps **14** and central section **12** are both of width W, flaps **14** in this configuration completely span central section **10** dividing the aforementioned U-shaped channel into three separate cells or compartments. Moreover, slots **20**, by virtue of the previously described alignment, are now adapted to receive tabs **18** which are accordingly inserted into and retained in their respective slots **20**, thereby forming a rigid three cell partition unit.

FIG. 1B shows a cross-sectional view of a unit erected from the basic blank of FIG. 1A in accordance with the above and inserted into a carton **22** of appropriate size and shape. It is apparent that flaps **14** define walls separating carton **22** into three distinct cells, A, B, and C. Walls **14** are rigidly supported at each side by portions **15** and **13** respectively of side sections **12** which are in turn supported by central section **10** which, as

illustrated, covers the bottom of carton 22. Cells A and C are formed on three sides by walls 13, 14 and 15 respectively of the partition unit and on the fourth side by a wall of carton 22. Cell B is formed on two sides by walls 14 and on the other two sides partly by walls 13 and partly by opposite walls of carton 22. As is apparent, all the cells are, by necessity, of a horizontal dimension or width W, equal to the width of central section 10. The vertical dimension or length of each cell will depend on width of portion 15 of side section 12. The length of cells A and C may be varied by varying the vertical dimension of the blank and thus the vertical dimension of portion 15. Of course the vertical dimension of carton 22 would also have to be varied accordingly. Alternatively, the relative lengths of cells A, B and C may be varied without changing the vertical dimension of the blank merely by shifting the position of flaps 14 vertically along side sections 12. It should be noted, however, that the length L of cell B cannot be reduced below its width W without losing the advantage of slots 20 in sections 13. This is best illustrated in FIG. 1B in which it can be seen that the vertical sidewalls of the partition unit include a gap of width W between portions 13 and 15 left by the folding of wall 14 inwardly. If walls 14 were spaced from each other by a distance less than W they would extend across to the spaces left by each other and thus tabs 18 would have no slots with which to register.

The basic blank of FIG. 1A may provide the basis for a one piece blank adapted to be erected into a plurality of the units of FIG. 1B. Imagine two or more of the units shown in FIG. 1B placed side to side along their vertical dimensions, that is, with their lengthwise walls 13 and 15 in surface to surface contact, as illustrated in cross section in FIG. 2B. It can be seen that the walls 13 and 15 of one unit are in surface contact respectively with the walls 15 and 13 of an adjacent unit. It is only necessary to connect such contacting walls at their upper terminal edges along fold lines to form a one piece blank which may be erected into such a unit.

FIG. 2A shows a fragmentary plan view of such a blank consisting of a plurality of the blanks of FIG. 1A connected along their outer edges by fold lines 24, like reference numerals designating like parts. While the drawing illustrates one complete basic blank and fragment of two others connected on either side thereto, this is merely by way of illustration, it being understood that any number of the basic blanks of FIG. 1A may be connected up in such a string to form a one piece blank adapted to be erected into a unit consisting of a like number of the units of FIG. 1B. As best shown in FIG. 2A, the flaps 14 of adjacent side sections 12 overlap a distance 25. This overlapping relationship will be discussed hereinafter with respect to the erected blank.

To erect a unit from the blank of FIG. 2A, the basic blank is erected as hereinbefore described, folding side sections 12 to a parallel vertical position and folding flaps 14 inwardly to span central section 10, tabs 18 being inserted in slots 20. The side sections 12 of adjacent blanks are then folded over downwardly and away from central section 10 of the erected basic blank onto the side sections 12 of the erected basic blank in surface to surface relationship. The adjacent basic blanks are then erected in the same manner and the process is repeated until all basic blanks of the entire one piece blank are erected. In this configuration, all adjacent side sections 12 are in surface to surface contact and central sections 10 are in the same plane and contiguous to each other along fold lines 11.

A unit erected from the blank of FIG. 2A in accordance with the foregoing is illustrated in FIG. 2B having been inserted in a carton 23 of appropriate size. It will be apparent that the previously mentioned overlapping relationship of flaps 14 of adjacent side sections 12 results in a gap of distance 25 in the walls 13 separating adjacent cells B. For the packaging of large articles this space or gap 25 will present no difficulty. However, if desired, for example, where the carton is used to package articles of a small size, space 25 may be shortened or completely eliminated by shortening or eliminating the previously mentioned overlap of the flaps 14 of adjacent side sections 12 on the blank of FIG. 2A. It will be apparent that in order to eliminate space 25, the length L of cell B must be at least twice its width W.

A second embodiment of the partition blank of the present invention representing an expansion of the blank of FIG. 1A is illustrated in FIG. 3A. In this embodiment two wing portions generally designated 26 are extended from side sections 12 of the basic blank of FIG. 1A along fold lines 27. Flaps 14 are cut away from wing portions 26 along cut lines 29. Wing portions 26 are divided by fold lines 28 into a central wing portion 30 and two wing flaps 32 positioned on either side of central wing portion 30. Wing flaps 32 are cut from their respective contiguous side sections 12 along cut lines 34 so that they are freely swingable around fold lines 28. The blank of this embodiment is illustrated for the purpose of symmetry with wing flaps 32 having a width W equal to the width of central section 10 and fold lines 28 being aligned with fold lines 16 and slots 20 respectively, it being understood that many variations of dimension and alignment may be made to form cells of a variety of shapes and sizes.

THe method of erecting the blank of FIG. 3A is best illustrated by FIG. 3C which shows a partially erected blank. The basic blank is erected in the fashion previously described. Wing portions 26 are folded downwardly over onto side sections 12 to a position in surface to surface contact therewith. Wing flaps 32 are then folded outwardly as illustrated from side sections 12 along fold lines 28 to a position generally perpendicular to portions 30 and side sections 12.

A cross-sectional view of the blank of FIG. 3A erected in accordance with FIG. 3C and inserted into a carton 27 of appropriate size is illustrated in FIG. 3B, like reference numerals designating like parts. It will be apparent that in this embodiment all the cells are not completely rigid since flaps 32 are free to swing around fold lines 28. A more rigid structure may be constructed by providing flaps 32 with tabs and cutting slots in carton 27 adapted to receive said tabs.

The second embodiment of my blank likewise may be strung together to form a one piece blank of indeterminate length adapted to be erected into a plurality of the units shown in FIG. 3B. For this purpose the basic blank of FIG. 3A may be conveniently modified so as to be less cumbersome and easier to erect in combination. This construction is illustrated in FIG. 4A, which shows a complete modified version of the basic blank of FIG. 3A connected on either side by connecting portions 36 along fold lines 38 to like blanks shown only in fragmentary view, it being understood that any number of such blanks may be connected together as shown, adapted to be erected into any number of the basic units shown in FIG. 3A. For the purpose of symmetry, connecting portion 36 is shown of width W equal to the width of central section 10. Such dimension may be varied if desired. The length or vertical dimension of connecting portion 36 may also be varied within the scope of the invention, the connecting portion 36 being shown of reduced length merely to illustrate the portion which actually serves to connect adjacent basic blanks (any extension would of necessity be cut away from the flapped wing portion as will hereinafter become apparent). Referring to the complete modified basic blank shown in FIG. 4A and comparing it to the basic blank of FIG. 3A, it can be seen that one wing portion (here the left one, generally designated 26*a*) is modified by providing tabs 40 extending from the outer edges of wing flaps 32. The other wing portion (here the right one, generally designated 26*b*) is modified by eliminating wing flaps 32 and providing slots 42 aligned with fold lines 28 of wing portions 26*a*. Since wing portion 26*b* no longer has wing flaps adapted to fold inwardly, its vertical dimension has been shortened to correspond to the vertical dimension of side sections 12 so as to allow for insertion of the unit, once erected, into a carton of such dimension as hereinafter described. It should be emphasized that this modification is merely a preferred embodiment, it being feasible to erect a plurality of the units of FIG. 3B from a one piece blank formed from a plurality of the unmodified basic blanks of FIG. 3A connected

together by connecting portions as described above. As will be apparent, however, such a blank will have alternate cells A, B, and C separated by two walls each formed by two wing flaps **26** freely swingable about their respective fold line axes **28**. The modified version here described, on the other hand, is adapted to form a unit comprised of rigid cells and is therefore preferred.

The blank of FIG. **4A** is erected as follows: The basic blank representing a modified version of the blank of FIG. **3A** is erected as previously described in connection with FIG. **3A** with the exception that only one set of wing flaps (on wing portion **26***a*) is folded outwardly. Connecting portions **36** and the wing portions of the next adjacent blanks are each folded upwardly along fold lines **38** to form a U-shaped channel consisting of connecting section **36** as the base and wing portions **26***a* and **26***b* respectively as the sides, similar to the previously described channel formed by central section **10** and side sections **12**. Tabs **40** on wing flaps **32** of wing portion **26***a* are inserted into registering slots **42** in wing portion **26***b*. The process is repeated until all the modified basic blanks are erected.

A blank erected in accordance with the forgoing and inserted into a carton **44** of indeterminate length is illustrated in FIG. **4B**, like reference numerals designating like parts. As a result of tabs **40** and slots **42**, it is apparent that all cell walls are rigidly in position with the possible exception of the walls defining the three cells A, B, and C at each end of the carton (e.g. to the right and left). This may be avoided by providing both terminal wing portions **26** with tabs and flaps (like those on wing portions **26***a*) adapted to register with slots appropriately positioned in the walls of carton **44** (as previously explained with regard to the blank of FIG. **3A**). Alternatively the blank could be cutoff and terminated on both sides along fold lines **27** so that the terminal sections of the blank are side sections **12**. When erected, the terminal cells A, B, and C at each end of the carton would be of the rigid construction shown in FIG. **1B**, having been formed from the basic blank of FIG. **1A**.

The partition units of the present invention are inexpensive to manufacture and easy to erect. Moreover, because of the ease of erection, they may be sold in that blank form to users, thereby saving such users considerable storage costs.

While only a single embodiment of the present invention has been herein specifically disclosed, it will be apparent that many variations may be made thereto without departure from the scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A die-cut blank for folding into a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton comprising: a sheet of material divided by a pair of first fold lines into a central section of a first width and two side sections, each side section having a cutout side flap connected to its respective side section by a second fold line perpendicular to said pair of first fold lines and said side flaps extending from said second fold lines to their outer edges opposite said second fold lines in opposite directions a distance substantially equal to said first width, a tab extending from each of said side flaps at its outer edge and each side section being provided with a slot substantially aligned with the second fold line of the side flap of the opposite side section and spaced substantially the same distance from said central section as is the tab extending from said side flap of said opposite side section, whereby when said side sections are folded upwardly to a parallel relationship and said flaps are folded inwardly said flaps extend substantially across the entire central section from one side section to the other, said tabs being received within said slots.

2. The blank of claim **1**, wherein said side flaps are in point symmetry with each other with respect to the center of said sheet.

3. A one piece die-cut blank for folding into a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton comprising a plurality of the blanks of claim **1** integrally connected at their side sections in end to end relation along third fold lines generally parallel to said first fold line.

4. The blank of claim **3**, wherein said cutout side flaps are offset from the center of their respective side sections in opposite directions.

5. The blank of claim **1**, wherein said cutout side flaps are offset from the center of their respective side sections in opposite directions.

6. The blank of claim **5**, wherein said side flaps are in point symmetry with each other with respect to the center of said sheet.

7. A die-cut blank for folding into a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton comprising: a sheet of material divided by a pair of first fold lines into a central section of a first width and two side sections, each side section having a cut out side flap connected to its respective side section by a second fold line perpendicular to said pair of first fold lines and said side flaps extending from said second fold lines to their outer edges opposite said second fold lines in opposite directions a distance substantially equal to said first width, whereby when said side sections are folded upwardly to a parallel relationship and said flaps are folded inwardly said flaps extend substantially across the entire central section from one side section to the other, further comprising first and second wing portions extending from each of said side sections respectively and integrally connected thereto along a pair of third fold lines remote from and generally parallel to said central section, at least one of said wing portions defining a central wing section and two end sections connected to said central wing section by a pair of fourth fold lines extending in a direction perpendicular to said third fold lines to define wing flaps severed from said side sections and rotatable around said fourth fold lines, said wing flaps extending from said fourth fold lines a given distance to their outer edges.

8. The blank of claim **7**, wherein a tab extends from each of said side flaps at its outer edge and each side section has a slot substantially aligned with the second fold line of the side flap of the opposite side section and spaced substantially the same distance from said central section as is the tab extending from said side flap of said opposite side section.

9. The blank of claim **8**, comprising a wing portion extending from each of said side sections and integrally connected thereto along a pair of third fold lines remote from said central section, said wing portions defining a central wing section and two end sections connected to said central wing section by a pair of fourth fold lines extending in a direction perpendicular to said second fold lines, to define wing flaps severed from said side sections and rotatable around said fourth fold lines, said wing flaps extending from said fourth fold lines a given distance to their outer edges.

10. A one piece die-cut blank for folding into a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton comprising a plurality of the banks of claim **9** integrally connected at their wing portions by a connecting portion defined by a pair of fifth fold lines generally parallel to said first and third fold lines.

11. The blank of claim **9**, wherein said cutout side flaps are offset from the center of their respective side sections in opposite directions.

12. A one piece die-cut blank for folding into a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton comprising a plurality of the blanks of claim **7**, integrally connected at their wing portions by a connecting portion defined by a pair of fifth fold lines generally parallel to said first and third fold lines.

13. The blank of claim **12**, wherein said cutout side flaps are offset from the center of their respective side sections in opposite directions.

14. A die-cut blank for folding into a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton comprising a plurality of the blanks of claim **7**, wherein a tab extends from each of said wing flaps of said one wing portion at its outer edge, said wing flaps of the other wing portion having slots aligned with the fourth fold lines of said one wing portion and spaced substantially the same distance from said central section as are said tabs extending from the wing flap of said one wing portion, said one wing portion of one such blank integrally connected to said other wing portion of another of such blanks by means of a

connecting portion defined by a pair of fifth fold lines generally parallel to said first and third fold lines.

15. The blank of claim 7, wherein said cutout side flaps are offset from the center of their respective side sections in opposite directions.

16. The method of erecting a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton from the blank of claim 1 comprising: (a) folding said side sections along said pair of first fold lines toward each other; and (b) folding each side flap inward from the side section out of which it is cut toward the opposite section.

17. The method of erecting a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton from the blank of claim 3, comprising: (a) folding said side sections of a first blank of said plurality of blanks along said pair of first fold lines toward each other; (b) folding each side flap of said first blank inwardly from the side section out of which it is cut toward the opposite side section of said first blank; (c) folding the next adjacent side section of a second blank of said plurality of blanks along said third fold line outwardly away from said central section of said first blank to a position of planar contiguity with the adjacent side section of said first blank; and (d) repeating steps (a), (b) and (c) with the remainder of said plurality of blanks.

18. The method of erecting a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton from the blank of claim 7, comprising: (a) folding said side sections along said pair of first fold lines toward each other; (b) folding each side flap inward from the side section out of which it is cut toward the opposite side section; (c) folding said wing sections along said pair of third fold lines outwardly from said central section to a position of planar contiguity with adjacent side sections; and (d) folding said wing flaps outwardly away from said side sections.

19. The method of erecting a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton from the blank of claim 8, comprising: (a) folding said side sections along said pair of first fold lines toward each other; (b) folding each side flap inward from the side section out of which it is cut toward the opposite side section; and (c) inserting the tab extending from each side flap into the slot cut out in the opposite side section.

20. The method of erecting a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton from the blank of claim 9, comprising: (a) folding said side sections along said first fold lines toward each other; (b) folding each side flap inward from the side section out of which it is cut toward the opposite side section; (c) inserting the tab extending from each flap into the slot cut out in the opposite side section; (d) folding said wing portions along said third fold lines outwardly away from said central section to a position of planar contiguity with adjacent side sections; and (e) folding said wing flaps outwardly away from said side sections.

21. The method of erecting a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton from a blank of claim 10, comprising: (a) folding said side sections of each of said plurality of blanks along said pair of first fold lines toward each other; (b) folding each side flap of each of said plurality of blanks inwardly from the side section out of which it is cut toward the opposite side section of the same blank; (c) inserting the tab extending from each side flap into the slot cut out in the opposite side section of the same blank; (d) folding said wing portions of each of said plurality of blanks along said pair of said third fold lines outwardly from said central section to a position of planar contiguity with adjacent side sections; (e) folding said wing portions of adjacent blanks toward said connecting portion along said pair of fifth fold lines toward each other; (f) folding the wing flaps of each of said one wing portions toward the other wing portion to which it is connected such that said wing flaps span the width of said connecting portion.

22. The method of claim 21, including the further step of (g) inserting the tab extending from each flap of said one wing portion into the slots of said other wing portion.

23. The method of erecting a multicell partition unit for insertion into a carton from the blank of claim 12, comprising: (a) folding said side sections of each of said plurality of blanks along said pair of first fold lines toward each other; (b) folding each side flap of each of said plurality of blanks inwardly from the side section out of which it is cut toward the opposite side section of the same blank; (c) folding said wing portions of each of said plurality of blanks along said pair of said third fold lines outwardly from said central section to a position of planar contiguity with adjacent side sections; (d) folding said wing portions of adjacent blanks toward said connecting portion along said pair of fifth fold lines toward each other; (e) folding the wing flaps of each of said one wing portions toward the other wing portion to which it is connected such that said wing flaps span the width of said connecting portions.

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