

United States Patent

[[[3,600,871

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| [21] | Appl. No. | 856,318 |
| [22] | Filed | Sept. 9, 1969
Division of Ser. No. 604,383, Dec. 23, 1966,
Pat. No. 3,490,582 |
| [45] | Patented | Aug. 24, 1971 |
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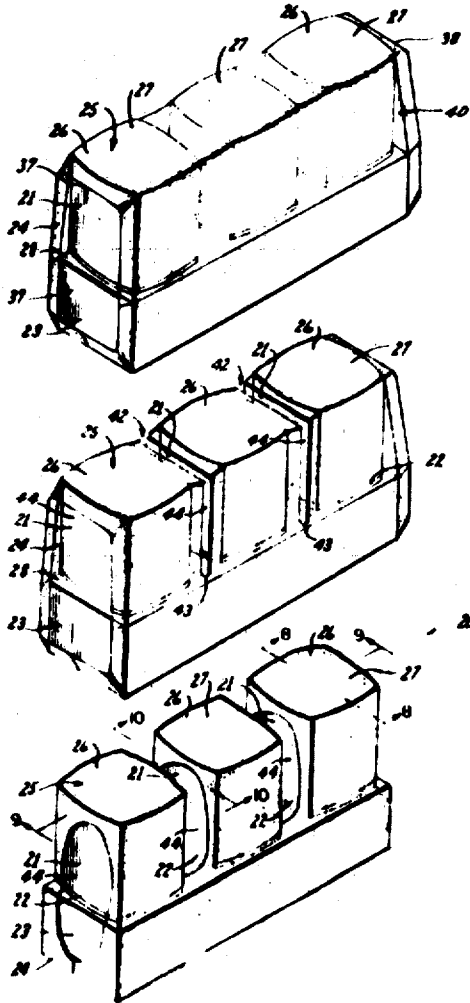
**[54] METHOD OF MAKING PACKAGE
CONSTRUCTION FOR PLURALITY OF ARTICLES
36 Claims, 18 Drawing Figs.**

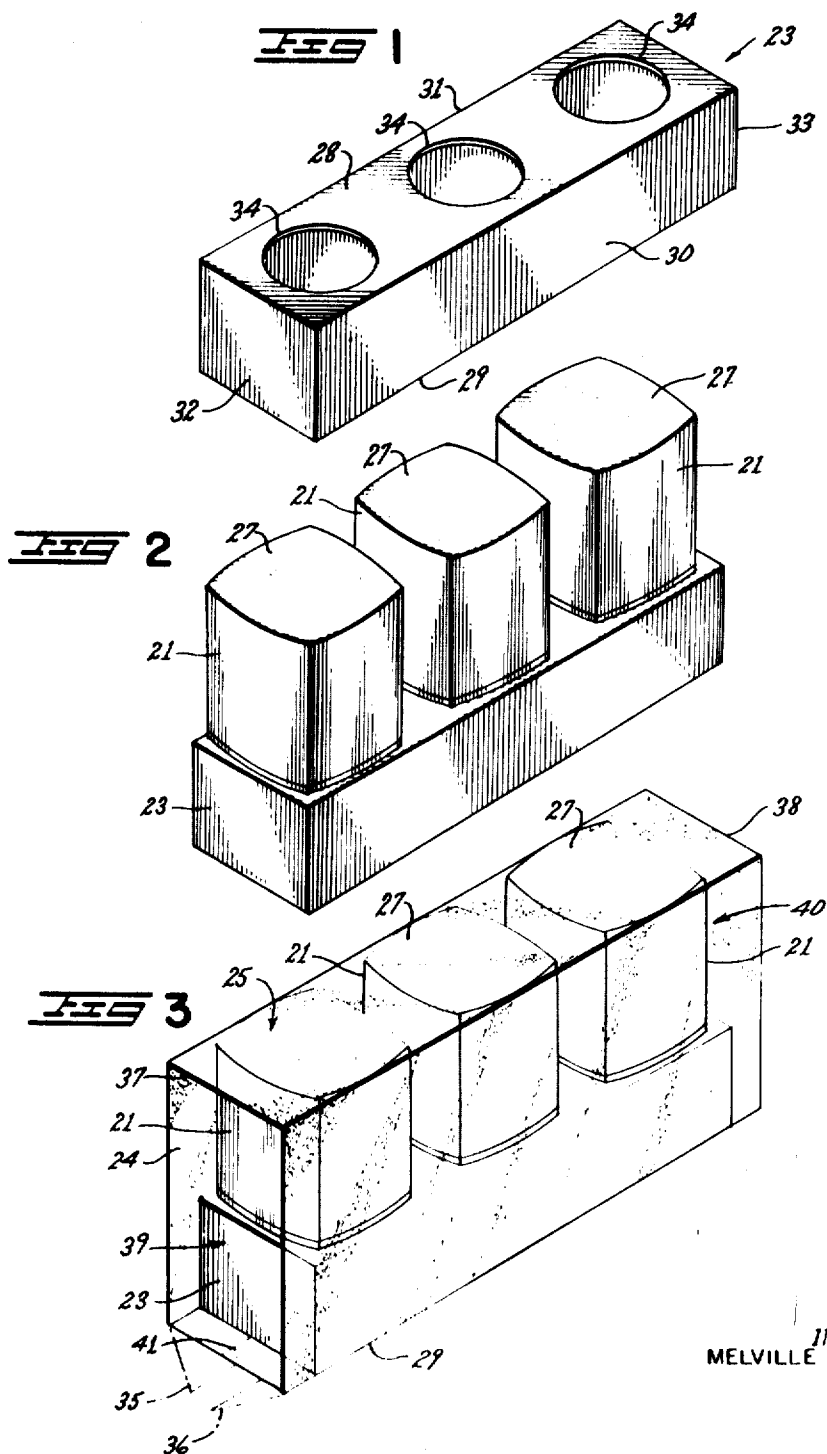
- [52] U.S. Cl. 53/3, 53/30
[51] Int. Cl. B65b 11/00,
B65b 53/02
[50] Field of Search 53/3, 26,
30, 32, 33, 48, 49; 206/45.33, 65 S

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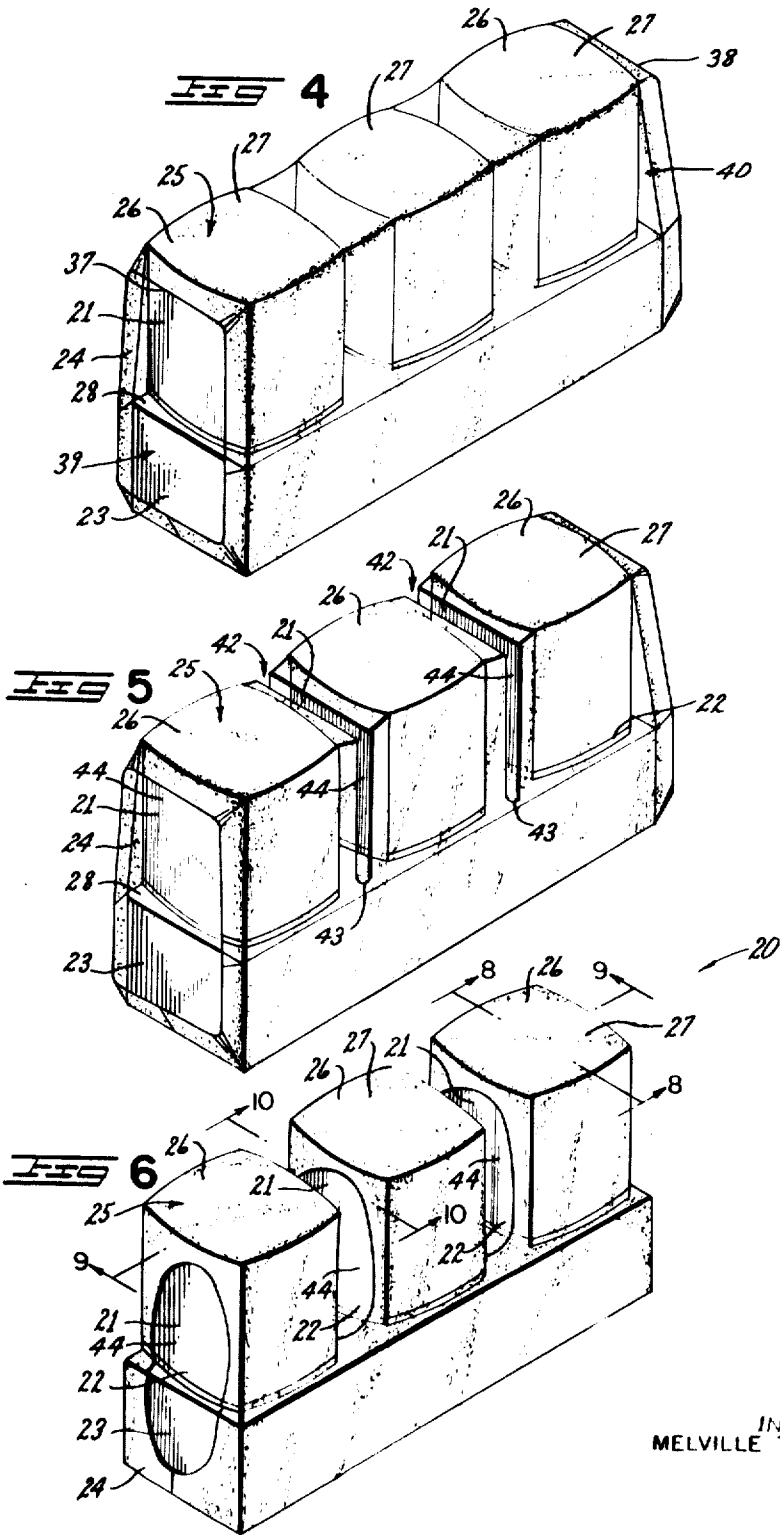
ABSTRACT: This disclosure relates to a package construction wherein a plurality of articles are held in a predetermined arrangement by a filmlike member having a portion thereof engaging against the upper ends of the articles with that portion being separated into a plurality of parts respectively engaging the upper ends of the articles so that the articles can be held in such predetermined arrangement without having the upper ends drawn toward each other and can be serially removed from the package construction by causing relative movement between the respective engaging part of the portion of the filmlike member and the package construction while the remaining articles are being maintained in the predetermined arrangement by the remaining parts of the filmlike member, the filmlike member being heat shrunk to hold and compact the articles in their predetermined arrangement together with or without a support member supporting the other ends of the articles, depending on the shape of the articles, and being compacted against the other ends of the articles by the heat shrunk filmlike member.





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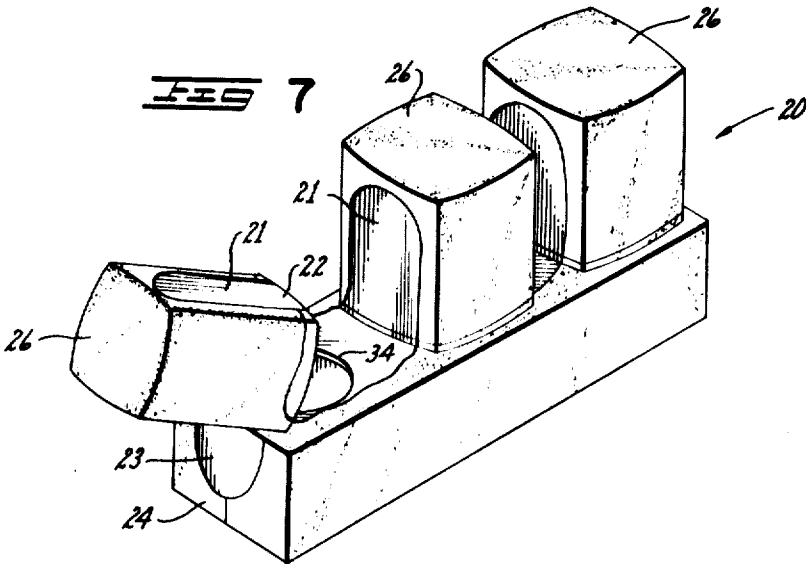


FIG 8

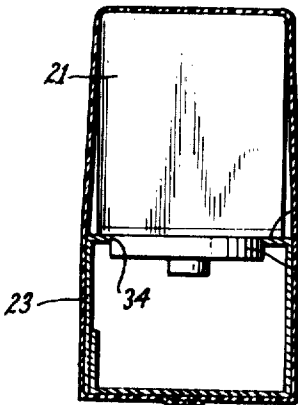


FIG 9

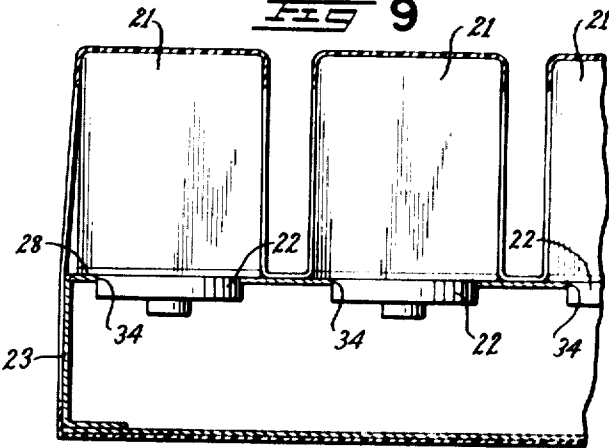
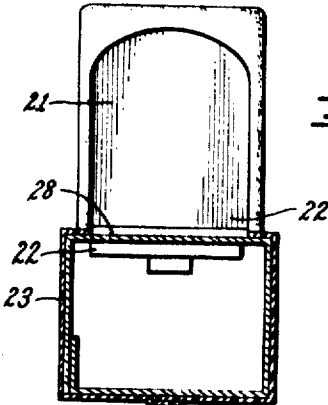
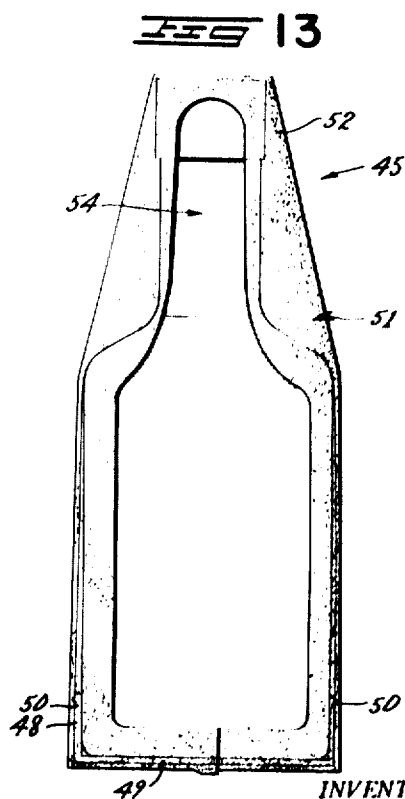
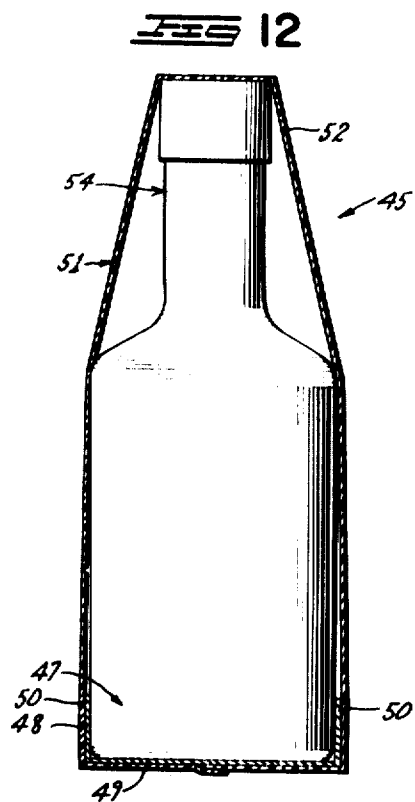
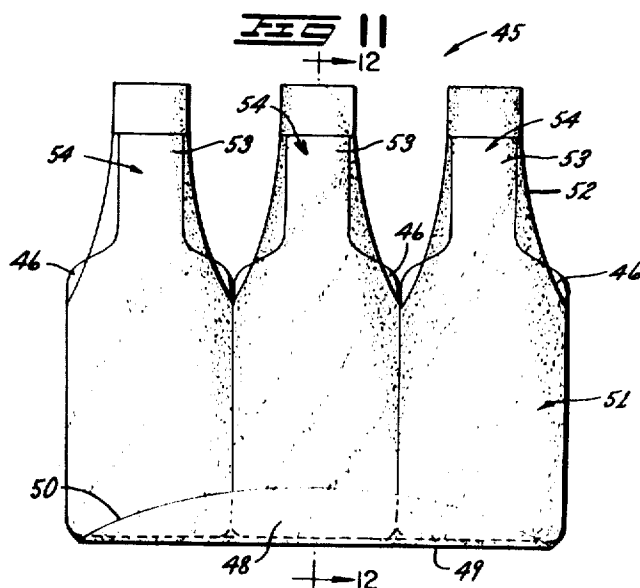


FIG 10



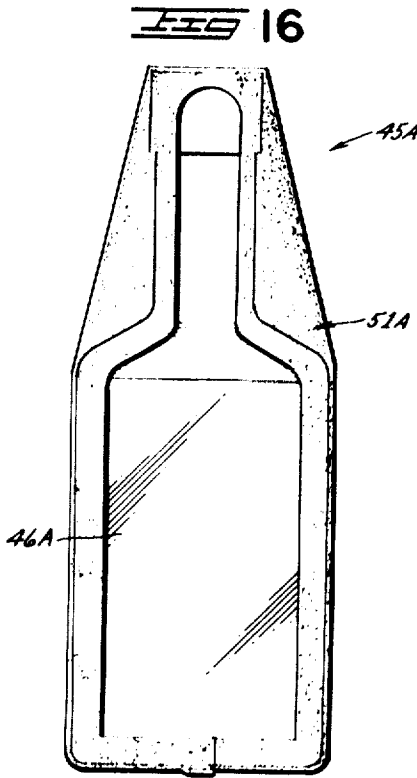
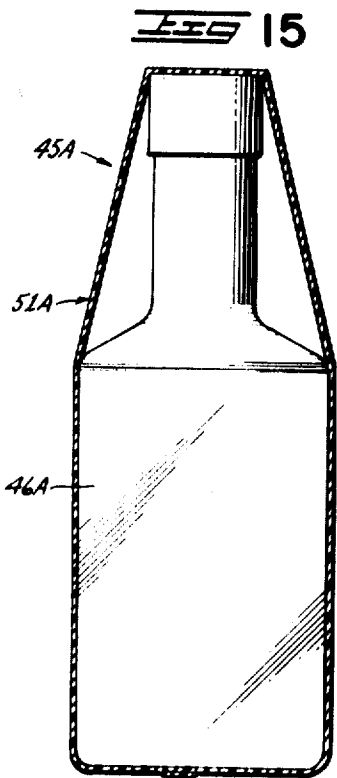
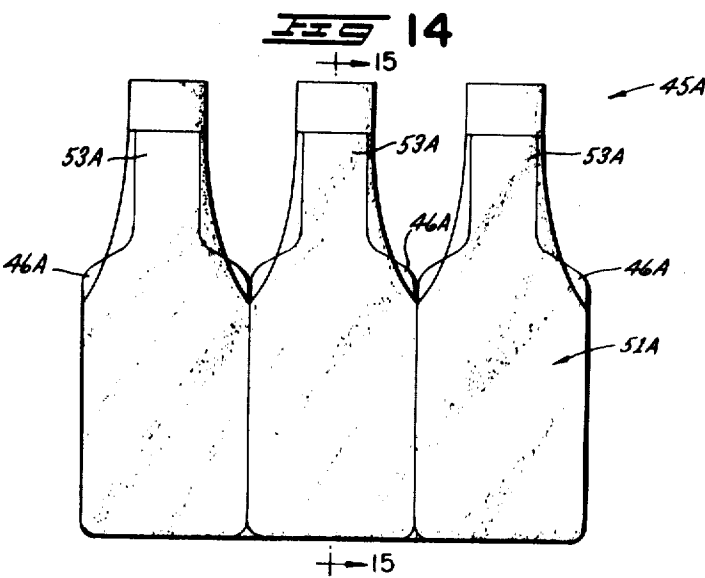
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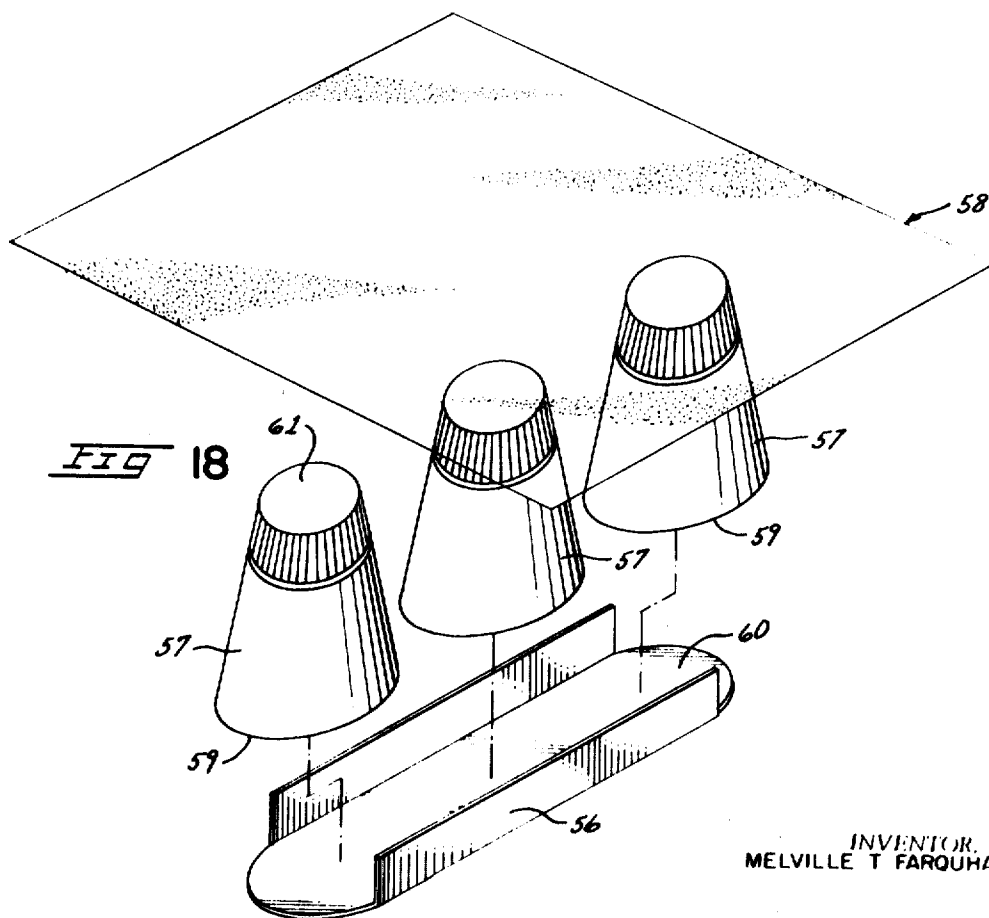
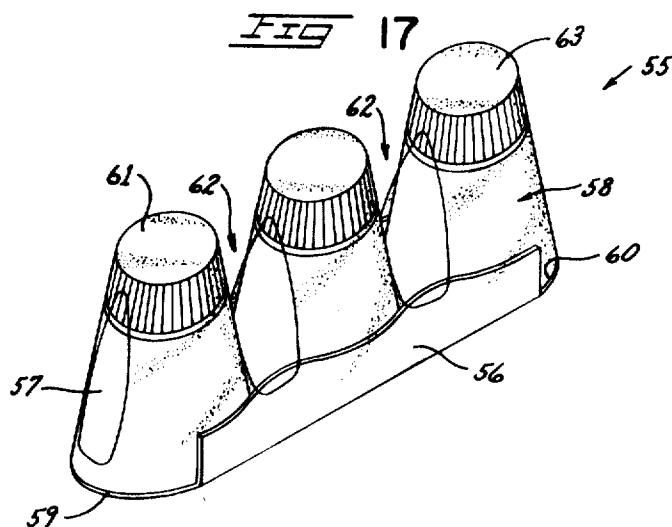
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METHOD OF MAKING PACKAGE CONSTRUCTION FOR PLURALITY OF ARTICLES

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a division of Ser. No. 604,383, filed Dec. 23, 1966 and now U.S. Pat. No. 3,490,582.

This invention relates to an improved package construction utilizing filmlike means as well as to an improved method for making such a package construction or the like.

It is well known that a plurality of articles can be held together in a predetermined arrangement by telescopically disposing the articles within a tubular filmlike member, with or without a traylike supporting member supporting the lower ends of the articles, and thereafter, heat shrinking the tubular filmlike member to tightly compact the articles together in the predetermined arrangement so that the resulting package construction can be utilized for shipping, storing, merchandising or other purposes as desired.

However, it has been found, according to the teachings of this invention, that when the articles are disposed in aligned arrangement and have tapering configurations, the heat shrinking of the tubular filmlike material caused the outboard articles to pivot or tip toward the middle article whereby an unattractive package construction is provided.

Also, when such prior known package construction is initially opened to permit removal of certain of the articles, the initial opening of the tubular filmlike member completely destroys the integrity of the package construction so that if only part of the articles are to be initially utilized, some additional means must be provided for maintaining the other articles in a desired arrangement for the subsequent storing thereof until the remaining articles are to be utilized.

Accordingly, one of the features of this invention is to provide a package construction of the above a package construction of the above type wherein the articles can have tapering configurations and the like and not be compacted together at their upper tapering ends. Another feature of this invention is to provide a package construction wherein the articles can be serially removed from the package construction while the remaining articles will be held in their predetermined arrangement without requiring auxiliary means to maintain such remaining articles in a proper condition for storage purposes and the like.

For example, one embodiment of the package construction of this invention has a portion of the filmlike member that engages the upper ends of the prearranged articles separated into a plurality of parts respectively engaging the upper ends of the prearranged articles and positively holding the same so that the articles will be disposed substantially perpendicular to the bottom of the package construction without tipping or cocking thereof and can be serially removed from the package construction by causing relative movement between their respective engaging parts of the portion of the filmlike member and the package construction, while the remaining articles are being retained in the predetermined arrangement by the remaining parts of the filmlike member.

Accordingly, it is an object of this invention to provide an improved package construction having one or more of the novel features set forth above or hereinafter shown or described.

Another object of this invention is to provide an improved method for making such a package construction or the like, the method of this invention having one or more of the novel features set forth above or hereinafter shown or described.

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

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an article support member for forming a package construction of this invention.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view illustrating the support member of FIG. 1 supporting a plurality of articles.

FIG. 3 is a view similar to FIG. 2 and illustrates the assembled support member and articles of FIG. 2 telescopically disposed within a heat shrinkable, tubular filmlike member.

FIG. 4 is a view similar to FIG. 3 and illustrates the tubular filmlike member in a partially heat shrunk condition.

FIG. 5 is a view similar to FIG. 4 and illustrates the partially heat shrunk tubular member of FIG. 4 having the upper portion thereof separated into a plurality of parts respectively engaging the upper end of the articles.

FIG. 6 is a perspective view illustrating the completed package construction of this invention formed by the further heat shrinking of the filmlike member of FIG. 5.

FIG. 7 is a view similar to FIG. 6 and illustrates one step in the method for serially removing the articles from the package construction of FIG. 6.

FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view taken on line 8—8 of FIG. 6.

FIG. 9 is a fragmentary, cross-sectional view taken substantially on line 9—9 of FIG. 6.

FIG. 10 is a cross-sectional view taken substantially on line 10—10 of FIG. 6.

FIG. 11 is a side view of another package construction of this invention.

FIG. 12 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken on line 12—12 of FIG. 11.

FIG. 13 is an enlarged end view of the package construction of FIG. 11.

FIG. 14 is a side view of another package construction of this invention.

FIG. 15 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken on line 15—15 of FIG. 14.

FIG. 16 is an enlarged end view of the package construction of FIG. 14.

FIG. 17 is a perspective view illustrating another package construction of this invention.

FIG. 18 is an exploded perspective view of the various parts for forming the package construction of FIG. 17.

While the various features of this invention are hereinafter described and illustrated as being particularly adapted for providing package constructions for a relatively small number of relatively small articles, it is to be understood that the various features of this invention can be utilized singly or in any combination thereof to provide like package constructions for a larger number of larger articles having different configurations and sizes as desired.

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

Referring now to FIG. 6, an improved package construction of this invention is generally indicated by the reference numeral 20 and comprises a plurality of articles 21 having the lower end means 22 thereof supported in space relation by a support member or means 23 while being held to and compacted against the support member 23 by a heat shrunk tubular filmlike member 24 having an upper portion 25 thereof separated into a plurality of parts 26 respectively engaging and compacting against the upper end means 27 of the articles 21 whereby the tubular filmlike member 24 completes the package construction 20 so that the articles 21 can be readily shipped, stored, merchandised or the like while the ultimate consumer can utilize the package construction 20 in a manner to serially remove the articles 21 in a manner hereinafter set forth while the remaining articles 21 are firmly held in the package construction 20 for subsequent storing and use thereof, as desired.

In particular, the heat shrinkable filmlike member 24 can comprise a transparent sheet of polyvinyl chloride which readily permits the ultimate consumer to remove a particular article 21 by the ultimate consumer merely grasping the outer surface of the engaging part 26 of the filmlike member 24 and its respective article 21 and pivoting the same outwardly relative to the package construction 20 in the manner illustrated in FIG. 7 whereby the engaging part 26 of the filmlike member 24 will tear across and separate from the remaining portion of

the filmlike member 24 so that the pivoted article 21 can be readily removed from the package construction 20 while the remaining articles 21 are positively held in a compact manner by the remaining parts 26 of the filmlike member 24 until it is desired to remove one or more of the remaining articles 21.

Thus, it can be seen that the package construction 20 of this invention not only provides an attractive display means for a plurality of articles 21 to be sold in a set of the desired number, but also the package construction 20 permits the ultimate consumer to serially remove the articles 21 from the package construction 20 as needed while providing suitable storage means for the remaining articles until the same are required as the integrity of the package construction 20 is not destroyed by the removal of the articles 21 until the last article 21 is removed.

Further, by forming the filmlike member 24 of transparent material, it can be seen that the ultimate consumer can readily view the packaged product means 21 on display shelves and the like and all advertising media and the like can be disposed on the articles 21 and/or support member 23 to be readily viewed through the transparent filmlike member 24, the transparent filmlike member 24 not only adding luster and sales appeal to the articles 21, but also enhancing the sales appeal of the informational media or other media on the articles 21 and/or support member 23.

One method of this invention for making the package construction 20 illustrated in FIG. 6 will now be described with the understanding that the particular support means 23 and the particular articles 21 can be of any suitable shape and configuration and need not be of the type hereinafter described.

For example, it can be seen in FIG. 1 that the support member 23 is a substantially rectangular boxlike means formed of cardboard or the like having top wall means 28 and bottom wall means 29 held in spaced relation by opposed sidewall means 30 and 31 and opposed end wall means 32 and 33. The upper wall 28 of the support member 23 is interrupted by a plurality of openings 34 to receive and hold the bottom end means 22 of the article 21 in the manner illustrated in FIGS. 8-10 whereby the articles 21 will be disposed in a predetermined arrangement and spaced from each other by the spacing means 34 of the support member 23.

For example, the articles 21 can comprise substantially rectangular flash cubes for cameras wherein the lower end means 22 thereof are of a shape to be substantially press fitted in the openings 34 and form the means for being telescoped into a particular socket of a flash gun or the like. Since each side face of the flash cube 21 includes an indicator that changes color if that particular part of the cube 21 has become defective, it can be seen that by having each cube 21 spaced from the adjacent cubes 21, the ultimate consumer can inspect all faces of the packaged cubes to determine whether any sides are bad without opening the package construction.

After the articles 21 have been assembled to the support member 23 in the manner illustrated in FIG. 2, a sheet of heat shrinkable material, such as the aforementioned polyvinyl chloride formed in any suitable manner, is disposed about the assembled support member 23 and articles 21 in the manner illustrated in FIG. 3 whereby the opposed ends or edges 35 and 36 of the sheet 24 are adapted to be disposed in overlapping relation along the bottom wall 29 of the support member 23 and be heat sealed together to form the tubular member 24 illustrated in FIG. 3 telescopically receiving the assembled support member 23 and articles 21, the resulting tubular member 24 having the opposed open ends 37 and 38 thereof extending beyond the opposed end means 39 and 40 of the assembled support member 23 and articles 21 for a purpose hereinafter described. Of course, it is to be understood that the filmlike member 24 can initially be formed integrally in the tubular configuration illustrated in FIG. 3 by extrusion or the like without having the bottom longitudinal seam means 41 previously described. Also the seam 41 could be located anywhere along the tubular member 24 other than at the bottom thereof and can be formed by solvent sealing rather than

by heat sealing. For example, such solvent sealing or securing means for the aforementioned polyvinyl chloride can comprise cyclohexanone.

In any event, the telescoping tubular filmlike member 24 is initially and partially heat shrunk into the configuration illustrated in FIG. 4 to cause the upper portion 25 of the filmlike member 24 to tightly compact against the upper end means 27 of the articles 21 and substantially draw inwardly toward the support member 23 between adjacent articles 21 as illustrated in FIG. 4, the opposed extending ends 37 and 38 of the filmlike tubular member 24 also partially overlapping the opposed end means 39 and 40 of the assembled support member 23 and articles 21 during this initial and partial heat-shrinking operation.

Thereafter, the upper portion 26 of the partially heat shrunk tubular filmlike member 24 is formed with slit means 42 between adjacent articles 21 with the slit means 42 dividing the upper portion 25 of the tubular filmlike member 24 into the plurality of parts 26 previously described and separating the same from each other not only at the top of the filmlike member 24 but also down the opposed sides of the filmlike member 24 to points 43 intermediate the top means 27 and bottom means or base 22 of the articles 21, the slit means 42 in the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 5 extending substantially to the top edge means 28 of the support member 23.

The slit means 42 in the upper portion 25 of the filmlike member 24 can be formed in any suitable manner, such as by cutting the top portion 25 with rotary knives, razor blades or other cutting device or may be formed therein by heated wire means, which, in effect, burns through the filmlike member 24 to form the slit means 42.

In any event, the combination illustrated in FIG. 5 is subsequently subjected to further heating to cause the final heat shrinking of the filmlike member 24 into the configuration illustrated in FIG. 6 wherein the separated parts 26 of the upper portion 25 of the filmlike member 24 not only tightly compacts against the respective top end means 27 of the articles 21 to compact the articles 21 and support member 23 together, but also overlap and compact against the sidewall means 44 of the respective articles 21 so that each heat shrunk part 26 of the filmlike member 24 holds its respective articles 21 to the support member 23 independently of the holding relation of the other parts 26 whereby the articles 21 will not be pulled toward each other by the shrinking operation of the filmlike member 24 as would be the case if the slit means 42 were not provided. Also, the causing of subsequent movement of one of the parts 26 and its respective article 21 relative to the package construction 20 in the manner illustrated in FIG. 7 to remove that particular article 21 from the package construction 20 does not affect the remaining parts 26 in their function of tightly compacting and holding their respective articles 21 to the support member 23.

Therefore, it can be seen that the method of this invention as illustrated in sequence in FIGS. 1 through 6 can simply and economically form the package construction 20 for the purpose previously described.

However, it is to be understood that the step of forming the slit means 42 in the filmlike member 24 can take place while the package construction is being passed through a heating tunnel or the like whereby the partial heat-shrinking operation of FIG. 4 and final heat-shrinking operation of FIG. 6 can both take place within such heating tunnel means so that a substantially continuous heat-shrinking operation can be provided for the tubular filmlike member 24.

Further, it may be found that when the sheet means 24 is initially disposed around the assembled support member 23 and articles 21 in the manner illustrated in FIG. 3 and have the overlapping edges 35 and 36 thereof heat sealed together to form the longitudinal seam 41, the upper portion 25 of the filmlike member 24 may be disposed against the upper end means 27 of the articles 21 in a tight enough relationship so that the partial heat-shrinking operation illustrated in FIG. 4 need not be required before the slit means 42 are formed in

the upper portion 25 of the filmlike member 24 whereby the partial heatshrinking step of FIG. 4 can be eliminated.

While the aforementioned polyvinyl chloride tubular member 24 of this invention has a relatively high impact and tear resistance so that the resulting package construction 20 can withstand normal shipping, storing and merchandising abuse or the like, the slit means 42 previously described readily permits a tear propagation across a particular part 26 of the filmlike member 24 when it is desired to remove its respective article 21 in the manner illustrated in FIG. 7 because the pivoting of such article 21 provides a relatively large moment arm to effect such tearing operation.

If desired, the material forming the heat shrunk tubular member 24 of this invention can comprise one or more sheets of polyvinyl chloride laminated to each other to produce the desired thickness and minimize gauge deviations in a particular layer and can have the heat-shrinking properties thereof substantially controlled or oriented whereby the degree of heat shrinking between the opposed ends 37 and 38 of the tubular member 24 of FIG. 3 will be different than the degree of transverse or girth shrinking thereof so that the ends 37 and 38 of the tubular member 27 will not pull back over the opposed end means 39 and 40 of the assembled support member 23 and articles 21 and the overlapping portions of the parts 26 will not pull over the top end means 27 of the respective articles 21 during the final heat shrinking operation so that the sidewall means 44 of the articles 21 will be properly engaged by the member 24 for the previously described compacting and holding function.

Another package construction of this invention is generally indicated by the reference numeral 45 in FIGS. 11-13 and is formed in substantially the same manner as the package construction 20 previously described except that the articles 46 of the package construction 45 comprise product-containing bottles or the like disposed in abutting relationship and are supported in an open top 47 of a traylike support member 48, the support member 48 having a bottom wall 49 and opposed sidewall means 50 to substantially stabilize the articles 46 in the encompassing heat shrunk tubular filmlike member 51 having the upper portion 52 thereof separated into a plurality of parts 53 respectively engaging and compacting against the upper neck portions 54 of the bottlelike articles 46.

However, it has been found that the package constructions of this invention can be formed in the manner previously described without requiring a support member for supporting the lower ends of the articles if the lower ends of the articles are so shaped that the same will not tend to pivot toward each other during the subsequent heat-shrinking operation on the encompassing tubular filmlike member.

For example, reference is now made to FIGS. 14-16 12—another package construction of this invention is generally indicated by the reference numeral 45A with parts thereof similar to the package construction 45 are indicated by like reference numerals followed by the reference letter A.

As illustrated in FIGS. 14-16, it can be seen that the heat shrunk tubular filmlike member 51A holds the articles 46A in a compact predetermined arrangement for the aforementioned purposes while permitting each article 46A to be serially removed from the package construction 45A without destroying the holding properties of the remaining upper parts 53A of the heat shrunk tubular filmlike member 51A for the purposes previously described in connection with the package construction 20. However, because the lower portions of the bottles or articles 46A have substantially rectangular cross-sectional configurations as shown, there is no tendency for the outboard articles 46A to have the upper ends 53A pivot toward the inboard articles 46A during the heat shrinking of the tubular filmlike member 51A whereby the stabilizing support 48 of FIG. 11 need not be utilized with the package construction 45A of FIG. 14.

While the package constructions 20 of FIG. 6 and the package construction 45 of FIG. 11 are illustrated with articles 21 and 51 having the lower portion thereof of substan-

tially conventional rectangular or cylindrical configurations, it is to be understood that the various features of this invention are particularly adaptable for forming like package constructions for articles having other configurations that greatly increase the tendency for the abutting articles to tip and ride up relative to each other during the heat shrinking of the encompassing filmlike tubular member.

For example, reference is now made to FIGS. 17 and 18 wherein another embodiment of package construction of this invention is generally indicated by the reference numeral 55 and comprises an open top traylike means 56 carrying a plurality of tapering containers or articles 57 in aligned relation and being encased in a heat shrunk tubular filmlike member 58 formed in the manner previously described.

However, it can be seen from FIGS. 17 and 18 that each article 57 has a relatively wide base or bottom portion 59 adapted to be disposed on the flat bottom wall means 60 of the traylike means 56 and progressively tapers from such bottom portion 59 to the top cap end 61 thereof whereby if the filmlike member 58 is not provided with the slit means 62 in the upper portion 63 thereof whereby if the filmlike member 58 is not provided with in the manner previously described, the subsequent heat shrinking of the tubular filmlike member 58 would readily cause the outboard articles 57 to tip or pivot toward the inboard article 57 in a manner more visually apparent than the articles 52 of FIG. 11.

Compound words containing the suffix "-like" are used herein to means that which is described by the word without the suffix and that which otherwise has its essential characteristics.

In view of the above, it can be seen that this invention not only provides an improved package construction for readily permitting serial removal of the packaged articles without affecting the packaged condition of the remaining articles, but also this invention provides improved methods for making such a package construction or the like.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for making a package construction for a plurality of articles having opposed ends comprising the steps of disposing a plurality of said articles in a predetermined arrangement, initially holding said articles in said predetermined arrangement by a filmlike member having a portion thereof engaging one set of said ends of said articles, and separating said portion of said filmlike member between adjacent engaged ends of said articles so that said separate parts of said portion respectively engage said one ends of said articles whereby said articles are each individually held substantially perpendicular to the bottom of said package construction without tending to tip toward an adjacent article and can be serially removed from said package construction by causing relative movement between the respective engaging part of said portion of said filmlike member and said package construction while the remaining articles are being retained in said arrangement by the remaining parts of said filmlike member.

2. A method as set forth in claim 1 and including the step of overlapping part of the sidewall means of each article by its respective part of said filmlike member.

3. A method as set forth in claim 1 and including the steps of providing said filmlike member in tubular form and telescopically disposing said articles in said tubular filmlike member.

4. A method as set forth in claim 1 and including the step of supporting the other ends of said articles with a support member.

5. A method as set forth in claim 4 and including the step of holding said support member and said articles together with said filmlike member.

6. A method as set forth in claim 4 and including the step of spacing said articles relative to each other by spacing means of said support member to provide said predetermined arrangement.

7. A method as set forth in claim 4 and including the steps of providing said support member in the form of an open top

traylike means, and disposing said articles in said open top of said traylike means.

8. A method as set forth in claim 5 and including the steps of providing said filmlike member in tubular form, and telescopically disposing said support member and said articles in said tubular filmlike member.

9. A method as set forth in claim 8 and including the step of overlapping the opposed ends of said assembled support member and articles with the opposed opened ends of said tubular filmlike member.

10. A method as set forth in claim 9 and including the steps of overlapping part of the sidewall means of each article by the respective part of said filmlike member, and separating each part also along the opposed sides of said tubular filmlike member to points intermediate the opposed ends of its respective article.

11. A method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said steps of separating said portion of said filmlike member into said parts includes the step of forming slit means in said filmlike member.

12. A method as set forth in claim 11 wherein said step of forming said said slit means takes place after said portion is disposed against said one ends of said articles.

13. A method as set forth in claim 11 wherein said step of forming said slit means takes place before said portion is disposed fully against said one ends of said articles in its completed position.

14. A method for making a package construction for a plurality of articles having opposed ends comprising the steps of disposing a plurality of said articles in a predetermined arrangement, disposing a portion of a heat shrinkable filmlike member against one set of said ends of said articles, separating said portion of said filmlike member between adjacent engaged ends of said articles so that said separate parts of said portions respectively engage said one ends of said articles, and heat shrinking said filmlike member to initially compact and hold said articles in said predetermined arrangement with said parts of said filmlike member respectively compacting against said one ends of said articles whereby said articles are each individually held substantially perpendicular to the bottom of said package construction without tending to tip toward an adjacent article and can be serially removed from said package construction by causing relative movement between the respective engaging part of said portion of said filmlike member and said package construction while the remaining articles are being retained in said arrangement by the remaining parts of said filmlike member.

15. A method as set forth in claim 14 and including the step of overlapping and compacting part of the sidewall means of each article by its respective part of said filmlike member during said heat-shrinking step.

16. A method as set forth in claim 14 and including the step of providing said filmlike member in tubular form, and telescopically disposing said articles in said tubular filmlike member before said heat-shrinking step so that said heat-shrinking step causes said tubular filmlike member to compact said articles between the opposed ends thereof.

17. A method as set forth in claim 14 and including the step of supporting the other end of said articles with a support member.

18. A method as set forth in claim 17 and including the step of holding and compacting said support member and said articles together with said filmlike member by said heat-shrinking step.

19. A method as set forth in claim 17 and including the step of spacing said articles relative to each other by spacing means of said support member to provide said predetermined arrangement.

20. A method as set forth in claim 17 and including the step of providing said support member in the form of an open top traylike means and disposing said articles in said open top of said traylike means.

21. A method as set forth in claim 18 and including the step of providing said filmlike member in tubular form, and telescopically disposing said support member and said articles in said tubular filmlike member before said heat-shrinking step so that said heat-shrinking step will compact said articles and said support member together.

22. A method as set forth in claim 21 and including the step of overlapping and compacting the opposed ends of said assembled support member and articles with the opposed open ends of said tubular filmlike member during said heat-shrinking step.

23. A method as set forth in claim 22 and including the step of overlapping and compacting part of the sidewall means of each article by the respective part of said filmlike member during said heat-shrinking step, and separating each part also along the opposed sides of said tubular filmlike member to points intermediate the opposed ends to its respective article.

24. A method as set forth in claim 14 wherein said step of separating said portion of said filmlike member into said parts includes the step of forming slit means in said filmlike member.

25. A method as set forth in claim 24 wherein said step of forming said slit means includes the step of forming said slit means by a heated device.

26. A method as set forth in claim 24 wherein said step of forming said slit means in said filmlike member includes the step of forming said slit means by a cutting device.

27. A method as set forth in claim 24 wherein said step of forming said slit means takes place after said portion is disposed against said one ends of said articles.

28. A method as set forth in claim 27 and including the step of partially heat shrinking said filmlike member before the step of forming said slit means to tightly compact said portion of said filmlike member against said one ends of said articles before forming said slit means.

29. A method as set forth in claim 24 wherein said step of forming said slit means takes place before said portion of said filmlike member is disposed fully against said one ends of said articles in its completed position.

30. A method as set forth in claim 24 wherein said step of heat shrinking said filmlike member takes place after said step of forming said slit means in said portion of said filmlike member.

31. A method of making a package construction for a plurality of flash cubes each having a substantially cubical portion with four sidewalls, a top wall, and a base, comprising the steps of: providing a rectangular boxlike support member having a surface with a plurality of openings therein; inserting said bases of said flash cubes into said openings so that said flash cubes are supported in a row with adjacent sidewalls of adjacent flash cubes being substantially parallel and spaced apart by a distance less than the width of a flash cube; surrounding said support member and said flash cubes with a heat shrinkable tubular filmlike member whose longitudinal axis is aligned with the longitudinal axis of said row; and heat shrinking said filmlike member about said support member and said flash cubes so that said filmlike member holds said support member and said flash cubes together with substantially the major parts of said adjacent sidewalls of adjacent flash cubes being directly exposed to each other, said filmlike member having a portion thereof engaging and compacting against said top walls of said flash cubes, whereby said flash cubes are each individually held substantially perpendicular to the bottom of said package construction without tending to tip toward an adjacent flash cube and can be serially removed from said package construction by causing relative movement between the respective engaging and compacting part of said portion of said filmlike member and said package construction while a remaining flash cube is being retained in said package construction by a remaining part of said filmlike member.

32. A method as set forth in claim 31 wherein after said heat shrinking each part of said filmlike member overlaps and compacts against parts of the sidewalls of its respective flash cube.

33. A method as set forth in claim 31 wherein after said heat shrinking said tubular filmlike member has opposed open ends overlapping and compacting against opposed ends of said support member and the respective outboard flash cubes.

34. A method as set forth in claim 31 wherein said support member has opposed sidewalls separated by said surface having said openings therein, and said bases of said flash cubes are inserted into said openings so that opposed sidewalls of said flash cubes are disposed substantially coplanar with said opposed sidewalls of said support member.

35. A method as set forth in claim 31 wherein said support member has opposed sidewalls separated by said surface having openings therein and said bases of said flash cubes are inserted into said openings so that opposed sidewalls of said flash cubes are disposed substantially coplanar with said op-

posed sidewalls of said support member, and wherein after said heat shrinking each part of said filmlike member overlaps and compacts against parts of the sidewalls of its respective flash cube and said tubular filmlike member has opposed open ends overlapping and compacting against opposed ends of said support member and the respective outboard flash cubes.

36. A method as set forth in claim 31 comprising the further step of serially removing a flash cube from said package construction by causing relative movement between said respective engaging and compacting part of said portion of said filmlike member and said package construction while a remaining flash cube is being retained in said package construction by a remaining part of said filmlike member.

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