# United States Patent

[11] 3,589,509


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[54] **COMBINATION CARRIER AND CAN OPENER**
**30 Claims, 12 Drawing Figs.**


[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **206/65,** 220/54, 294/87.2
[51] **Int. Cl.** ..... **B65d 79/00,** B65d 71/00
[50] **Field of Search** ..... 206/47, 65 C, 65 CT, 56; 220/54; 224/95.4; 294/87.28, 87.2



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**ABSTRACT:** This disclosure relates to a carrier and a plurality of containers having ends provided with tear-out portions, the carrier being constructed from a plurality of interconnected pull tabs which are each joined to an associate tear-out portion of the container ends whereby upon applying a manual opening force through the pull tabs or the containers the tear-out portions are removed to open the containers.

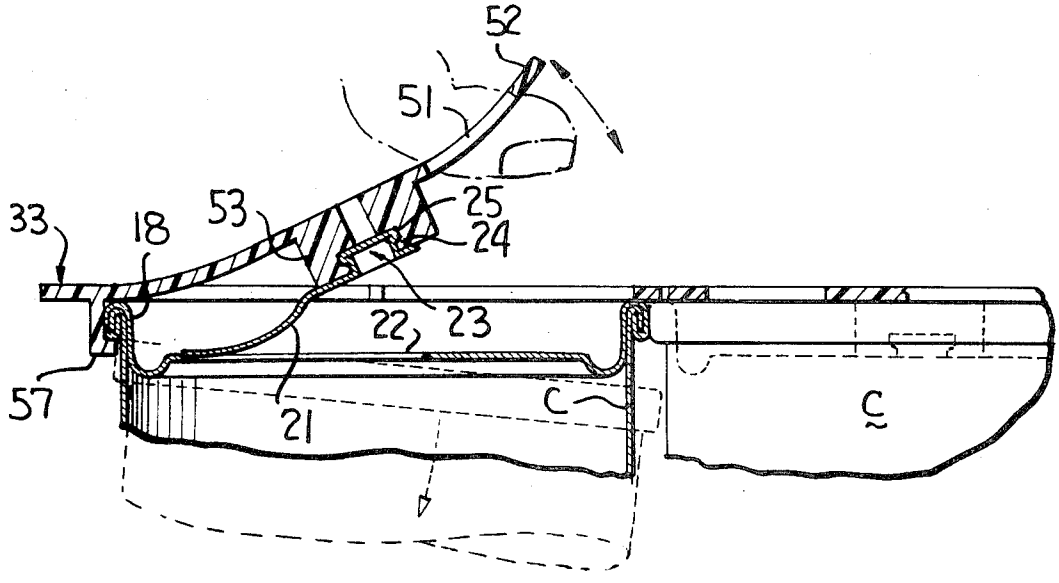



FIG. 1

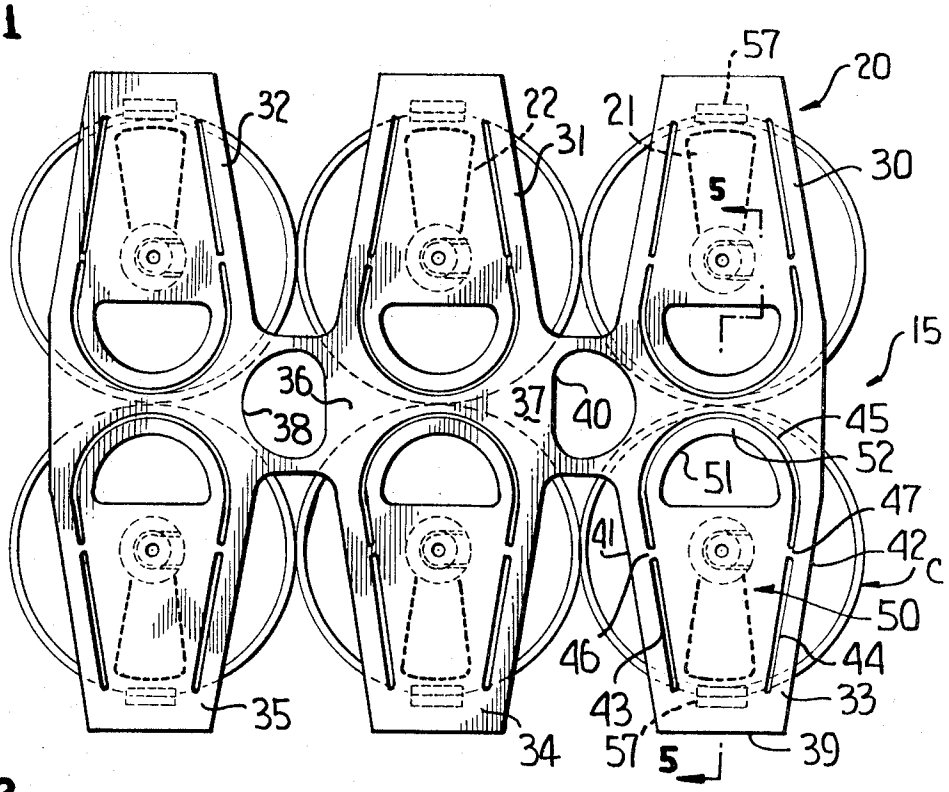



FIG. 2

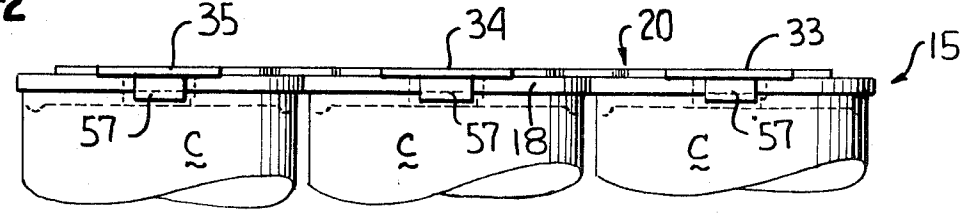



FIG. 3

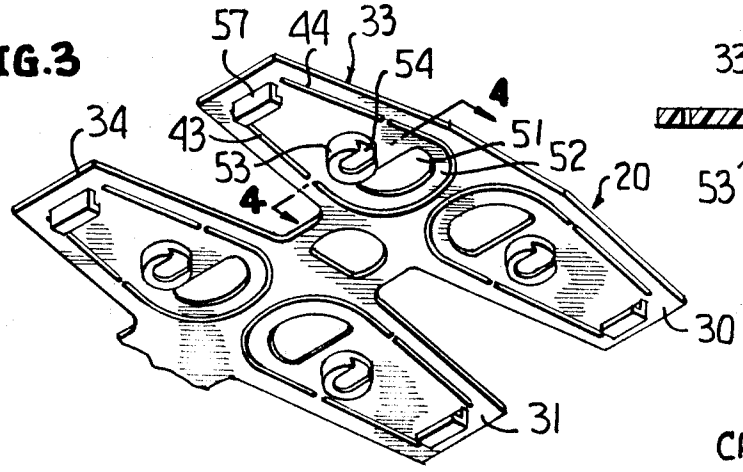
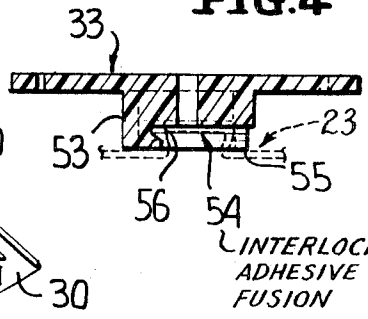



FIG. 4




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FIG.5

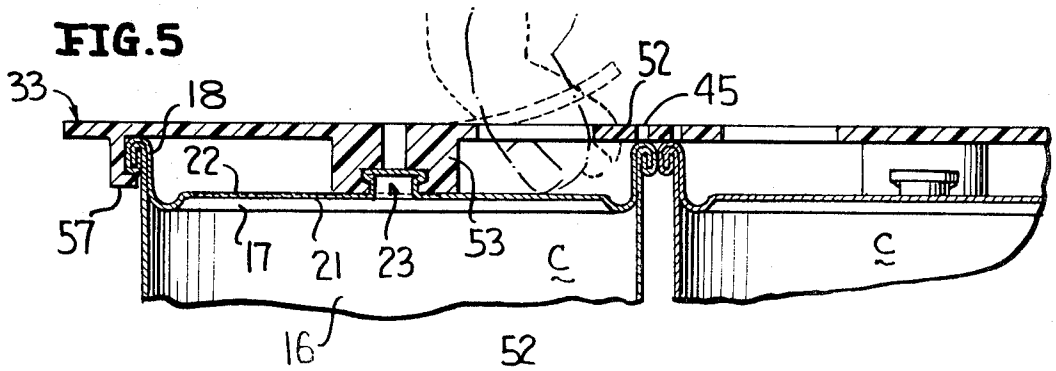



FIG.6

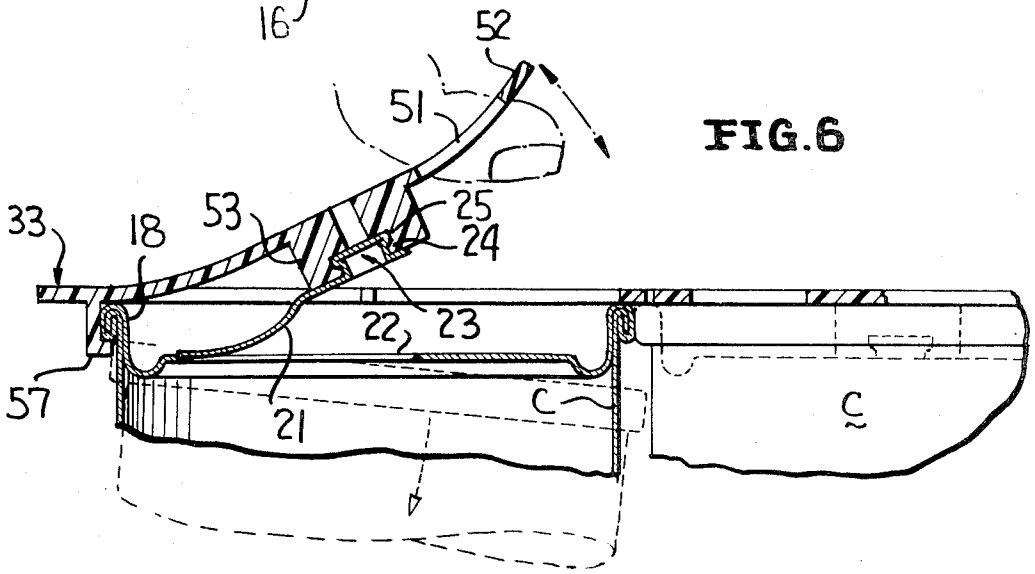
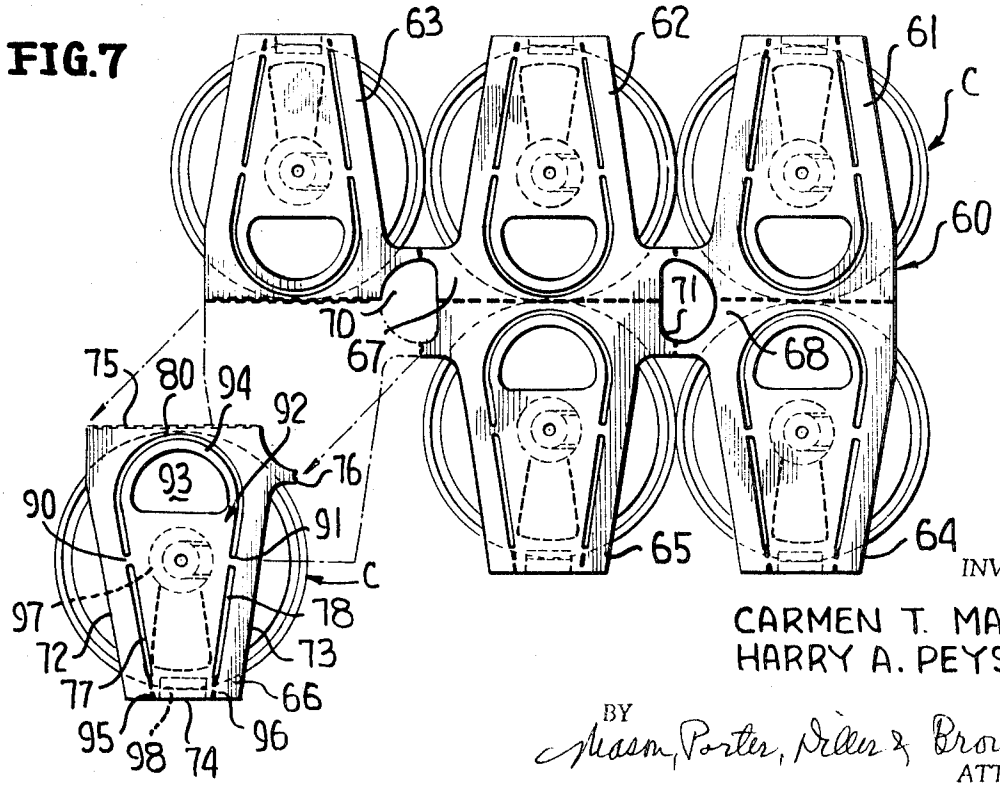



FIG.7




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FIG.8

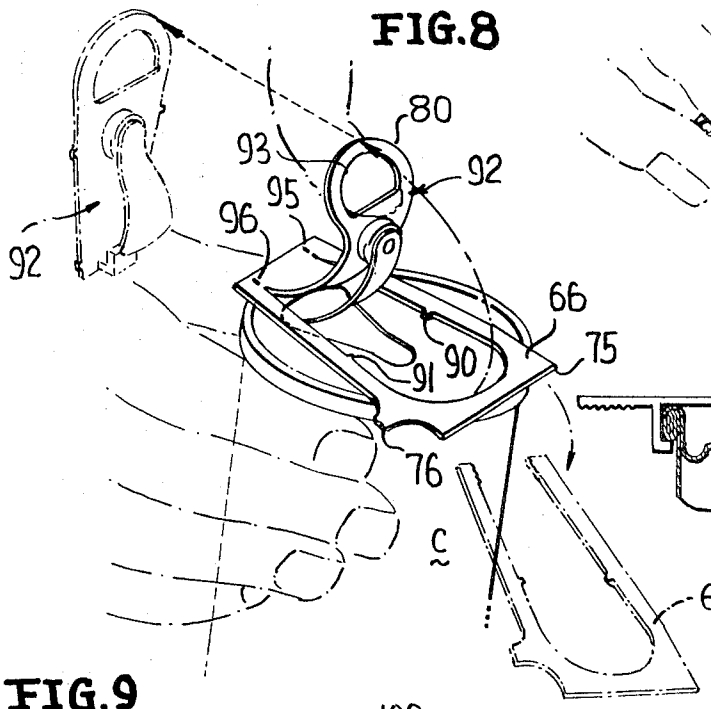



FIG.10

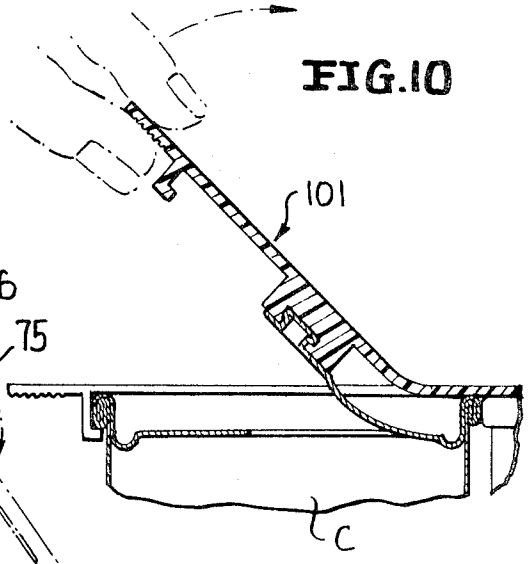



FIG.9

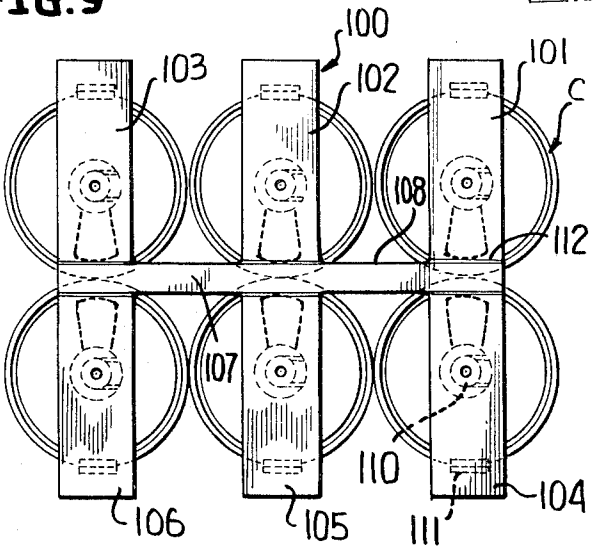



FIG.11

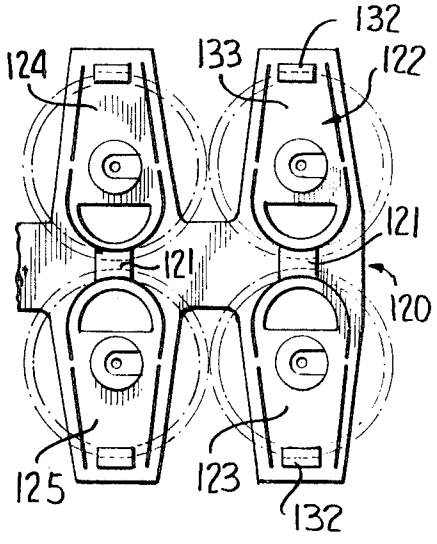
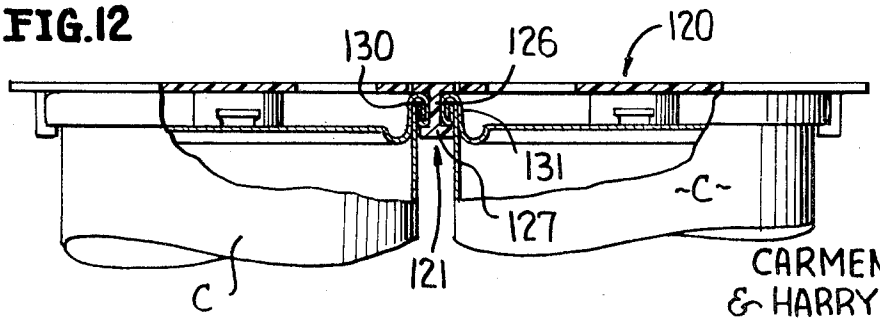



FIG.12




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# COMBINATION CARRIER AND CAN OPENER

It is well known to package a plurality of containers, such as bottles or cans, in a different variety of carriers or cartons. One relatively well known carrier is the conventional "basket-style" carrier which includes a carrying handle along a longitudinal centerline of the carrier and a plurality of container compartments which are normally arranged in pairs to form well-known four-pack, six-pack, etc. packages. Carriers of this type are generally used to package glass or similar fragile containers, and are not normally used for packaging metallic cans.

The wraparound style carriers are generally constructed from paperstock or similar foldable material, and are simply wrapped about a plurality of containers to again form four-pack, six-pack, etc. packages. Wraparound carriers are employed both for frangible and nonfrangible containers and can be used with or without longitudinal and transverse dividers.

More recently metallic containers have been packaged in carriers formed from apertured heat-shrinkable plastic material. In this case the containers are simply inserted into the apertures of the sheet material, the sheet material is then heated, and the material thereby shrinks to adequately grip the containers to permit the same to be carried by the carrier in four-pack, six-pack, etc. arrangements.

Each of the conventional carriers just described has proved relatively efficient for its only purpose, namely, to provide a package for a predetermined number of bottles, cans, or similar containers. Apart from performing this function and the ancillary of maintaining the containers in longitudinal and transverse spaced relationship in some instances, conventional carriers are in no way otherwise associated in a functional manner with their associated containers.

In keeping with this invention, a primary object thereof is to provide a novel package which includes a carrier and a plurality of containers, the containers having ends provided with conventional tear-out portions or tear strips but being devoid of conventional pull tabs, the carrier including means for securing pull-tab portions of the carrier to the tear-out portions of the can ends whereby the tear-out portions can be removed in the absence of conventional pull tabs or similar opening devices by simply applying a relative opening force between the containers and the carrier.

A further object of this invention is to provide a novel carrier of the type just described wherein the carrier is constructed from a plurality of interconnected pull tabs which are each individually secured to an associated tear-out portion of a container whereby a manual opening force applied to the pull tabs results in the opening of the tear-out portions.

A further object of this invention is to provide a novel carrier of the type heretofore described wherein the pull tabs may be partially or entirely removed from the carrier prior to, during and/or after the removal of the pull-tab portions.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a novel carrier of the type heretofore described wherein the securing means includes an integral boss carried by each pull-tab portion which interlockingly receives a rivetlike projection of an associated tear-out portion.

With the above and other objects in view that will hereinafter appear, the nature of the invention will be more clearly understood by reference to the following detailed description, the appended claimed subject matter, and the several views illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

## IN THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of a package constructed in accordance with this invention, and illustrates a plurality of containers having ends provided with tear-out portions interlockingly secured to pull-tab portions of the carrier.

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary side elevational view of the package of FIG. 1, and illustrates the manner in which the carrier overlies the containers secured thereto.



FIG. 3 is a fragmentary perspective view of the bottom of the carrier of FIGS. 1 and 2, and illustrates an integral boss provided with a recess associated with each of the pull-tab portions of the carrier for receiving a rivetlike projection of each of the container tear-out portions.

FIG. 4 is an enlarged sectional view taken generally along line 4–4 of FIG. 3, and more clearly illustrates the construction of the pull-tab bosses.

FIG. 5 is an enlarged transverse sectional view taken generally along line 5–5 of FIG. 1, and illustrates the manner in which one of the pull-tab portions of the carrier is gripped incident to the opening of an associated container by the removal of the tear-out portion thereof.

FIG. 6 is a transverse sectional view similar to that of FIG. 5, and illustrates the manner in which the tear-out portion of the container is completely removed, resulting in the subsequent removal of the container from the carrier, as shown in phantom outline.

FIG. 7 is a top plan view of another package constructed in accordance with this invention, and illustrates a plurality of weakening lines for removing individual containers and associated pull-tab portions from the carrier.

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of the removed section of the carrier of FIG. 7, and illustrates the manner in which a pull-tab portion of the removed section can be manually pivoted to removed the tear-out portion, as shown in phantom outline.

FIG. 9 is a top plan view another package constructed in accordance with this invention, and illustrates a plurality of pull-tab portions secured to rivetlike projections of tear-out portions of underlying containers.

FIG. 10 is an enlarged fragmentary transverse sectional view of the package of FIG. 9, and illustrates the manner in which one of the pull-tab portions of the carrier is pivoted to remove the tear-out portion of an underlying container.

FIG. 11 is a fragmentary bottom view of another carrier constructed in accordance with this invention, and illustrates means between transversely adjacent pull-tab portions of the carrier for interlockingly securing containers thereto.

FIG. 12 is an enlarged fragmentary transverse sectional view with parts broken away for clarity of the carrier of FIG. 11, and illustrates the manner in which transversely adjacent pairs of containers are interlockingly secured to the carrier.

Reference is now made to FIGS. 1 through 6 of the drawings which illustrate a novel package 15 constructed in accordance with this invention, the package 15 including a carrier 20 and a plurality of identical containers C.

Each of the containers C is of a conventional construction and includes a bottom closure (not shown), a cylindrical body 16 (FIG. 5), and an end unit or closure 17 which is secured to the body 16 by a conventional double seam 18. The closure 17 includes a tear-out portion or tear strip 21 (FIGS. 1 and 6) which is defined by a score line or similar conventional weakening line 22. Each of the tear strips 21 is disposed generally radially relative to the associated closure 17, and at a starting end portion (unnumbered) thereof each of the tear strips 21 includes an integral rivetlike projection or boss 23 (FIGS. 5 and 6) which includes a tubular cylindrical neck or stem 24, and an enlarged head 25. The closure 17 is preferably constructed from metallic material, and the projection 23 is formed to the configuration shown in FIGS. 5 and 6 by well known metal-forming practices. The purpose of the rivetlike projection 23 is to provide a point of securement for attaching the carrier 20 to each of the containers C, and to also provide a point for the application of a manual opening force to each of the tear strips 21 to remove the same from the containers C prior to, during or after the removal of the containers C from the carrier 20, as will be described more fully hereinafter.

Reference is now made particularly to FIGS. 1 through 3 of the drawings which illustrate the particular manner in which the carrier 20 is constructed. The carrier 20 is preferably constructed from a molded plastic sheet material blank which may for example, be polyethylene, polypropylene, or similar relatively rigid though resilient plastic material. The carrier 20

includes a plurality of interconnected segments 30 through 35 which are disposed in generally transversely adjacent pairs 30, 33; 31, 34; and 32, 35. The adjacent pairs of segments are interconnected by bridging portions 36, 37 provided with respective finger-receiving openings 38, 40 for manually gripping and carrying the package 15. Since the segments 30 through 35 are identical, reference will be made particularly to the carrier segment 33 of FIGS. 3 through 6 of the drawings, which will be sufficient for a complete understanding of the remaining carrier segments 30 through 32, 34 and 35.

The carrier segment 33 is of a generally polygonal configuration, and includes a pair of transverse edges 41, 42 which converge toward each other away from a longitudinal centerline of the carrier 20 toward a terminal edge 39. The segment 33 is provided inboard of the edges 41, 42 with weakening means in the form of a pair of slits 43, 44 and another generally inverted U-shaped slit 4. The slits 43, 44 are adjacent the respective edges 41, 42 and similarly converge in a direction toward the edge 39. The slits 43, 44 are separated from the ends (unnumbered) of the slit 45 by bridging or connecting portions 46, 47. The slits 43, 44, 45 and the bridging portions 46, 47 define a pull-tab portion 50 of the segment 33 having a finger-receiving opening 51 in a starting end portion 52 thereof.

Substantially medially of the length of the pull-tab portion 50 there is disposed a downwardly projecting boss 53 (FIGS. 3 and 4) which is of a generally cylindrical configuration, and includes a slot or recess 54 which defines means for securing the pull-tab portion 50 to the rivetlike projection 23 of the associated underlying tear-out portion 21. The chamber or slot 54 is of a generally U-shaped configuration as viewed from the bottom (FIG. 3), and in transverse cross section the slot 54 has a cross section corresponding to the exterior shape of the projection 23, as shown in FIG. 5. The slot 54 is thereby defined by a generally U-shaped lip 55 which engages beneath the head 25 of the projection 23, as well as surrounds the neck 24 through 180° of its periphery. A larger generally U-shaped slot 56 above the lip 55 receives the head 25 of the underlying tear-out tab projection 23. As viewed in FIGS. 1, 3 and 4 of the drawings, each container C is assembled to the carrier 20 by forcing each of the projections 23 into the associated chamber 54 of the bosses 53 by a right-to-left movement until the projections 23 are fully seated within the associated chamber 54 in the manner clearly illustrated in FIGS. 1, 5 and 6 of the drawings. In this position each of the containers C is supported by the carrier 20 due to the interlocked relationship between the chamber means 54 of the bosses 53 and the projections 23 of the tear-tab portions 21. In lieu of this interlock, each boss 53 may be fused or adhesively secured to an associated projection 23, as is indicated in FIG 4 of the drawings. Though this interlock is sufficient to maintain the containers C and the carrier 20 in assembled relationship, each of the segments 30 through 35 is also provided with a generally L-shaped locking member 57 adjacent each of the edges 39 which interlockingly engages beneath the double seams 18 (FIG. 5) of the containers C to augment the interlocked relationship thereof relative to the carrier 20.

As is readily apparent in FIG. 1, the entire package 15 can be grasped through the openings 38, 40 to carry the package 15 in a conventional manner. When it is desired to open any one of the containers C by removing the tear-out portions 21 therefrom, a person's finger is inserted within the opening 51 of the pull-tab 50 in the manner illustrated in FIG. 5 of the drawings relative to the pull-tab 50 of the carrier segment 33. The starting end portion 52 can then be flexed upwardly, as illustrated in broken lines in FIG. 5 to permit one to obtain a good grip on the starting end portion 52. This upward bending of the starting end portion 52 is permitted because of the resilient nature of material from which the carrier 20 is constructed, as well as because of a hinging or bending action which takes place at the bridging portions 46, 47.

As the pull-tab portion 50 is bent upwardly or pivoted in a counterclockwise direction from the position shown in FIG. 5 toward the position shown in FIG, 6, the manual opening force applied thereto is sufficient to break the bridging portion 46, 47 and eventually rupture the tear-out portion 21 adjacent the projection 23 due to the opening force which is transferred to the tear-out portion 21 through the boss 53 and the projection 23 interlocked thereto. As the pivoting movement continues in a counterclockwise direction as viewed in FIG. 6, the entire tear-out portion 21 is removed along the now completely ruptured score line 22 (FIG. 6) and the container C can be removed by pivoting the same downwardly and clockwise as viewed in FIG. 6 until the double seam 18 is released from the L-shaped interlocking member 57. After the container C has been removed from the carrier 20, the pull-tab portion 50 is released and the natural rebound characteristics of the material thereof results in the pull-tab portion 50 returning to its initial position (FIG. 5) with the tear-out portion 21 remaining attached thereto. Thus, the pull-tab portion 50 of each of the segments 30 through 35 functions not only to maintain each container and carrier in assembled relationship, but also serves to open each container C by removing the tear-out portion 21 therefrom in the manner heretofore described. Furthermore, it should be particularly noted that after the tear-out portions 21 have been removed, they remain secured to the carrier 20. Thus, the carrier 20 functions in a conventional manner to maintain the containers C assembled thereto to form the package 15, and also functions additionally to provide means for opening each container and for retaining each torn-out portion 21 assembled to the carrier. The latter function is, of course, highly desirable from the standpoint of curtailing or limiting the conventional practice of simply discarding conventional tear strips in an indiscriminate manner resulting in such known damage as cut feet when conventionally discarded tear strips are stepped upon as, for example, at beaches.

Reference is now made to FIG. 7 of the drawings which illustrates another carrier 60 which is similar to the carrier 20 of FIGS. 1 through 6. The carrier 60 is likewise preferably constructed from a molded plastic sheet material blank, such as polyethylene, and includes a plurality of interconnected segments 61 through 66 which are disposed in generally transversely adjacent pairs 61, 64; 62, 65; and 63, 66, the latter being illustrated in a position removed from the remaining segments. The adjacent pairs of segments are interconnected by bridging portions 67, 68 provided with respective finger-receiving openings 70, 71 for manually gripping and carrying the carrier 60 and the containers C secured thereto. Since the segments 61 through 66 are identical, reference will be made particularly to the carrier segment 66 which will be sufficient for a complete understanding of the remaining carrier segments 61 through 65.

The carrier segment 66 is of a generally polygonal configuration, and includes a pair of transverse edges 72, 73, a longitudinal edge 74 and a pair of weakening lines 75, 76. The purpose of the weakening line 75, 76 is to permit the segment 66, and any of the remaining segments 61 through 65, to be removed from the carrier 60 in the manner shown in FIG. 7 incident to the opening of the associated can C. The segment 66 is provided inboard of the edges 72, 73 with weakening means in the form of a pair of slits 77, 78 and another generally inverted U-shaped slit 80. The slots 77, 78 are adjacent to respective edges 72, 73 and similarly converge in a direction toward the edge 74. The slits 77, 78 are separated from the slit 80 by a pair of bridging portions 90, 91. The slits 77, 78, 80 and the bridging portions 90, 91 define a pull-tab portion 92 having a finger-receiving opening 93 in a starting end portion 94 thereof.

The pull-tab portion 92 is further defined by a pair of weakening lines 95, 96 which form extensions of the slits 77, 78 respectively.

Beneath the pull-tab portion 92 the segment 66 includes a boss or projection 97 and an L-shaped locking member 98

which are identical to the respective elements 53, 57 of the carrier 20.

The major differences between the carrier 60 and the carrier 20 are the provision of the weakening lines 75, 76, the weakening lines 95, 96, and the closer distance between the ends of the slits 77, 78 and the edge 74 as compared to the distance between the ends of the slits 43, 44 and the transverse edge 39 of the carrier 20.

When it is desired to remove a container or can C from the carrier 60, any one of the pull-tab portions 92 of the segments 61 through 66 is grasped and pulled in the manner heretofore described relative to FIGS. 5 and 6. However, in the case of the carrier 60 continued manual opening force not only breaks the bridging portions 90, 91, but continues further to rupture the weakening lines 95, 96 whereby the entire pull-tab 92 is wholly removed from the associated segment. The pull-tab 92 is therefore entirely removed from any one of the segments, as compared to the operation of the carrier 20 in which the pull-tabs and the associated tear strips removed from the cans remain attached to the carrier 20 after an opening operation.

The segments 61 through 66 may also be selectively removed from the carrier 60, as shown diagrammatically by the segment 66 in FIGS. 7 and 8, prior to an opening operation. Once the segment has been removed the pull-tab is grasped, pulled and wholly removed from the segment, resulting in the removal of the tear-out portion, as shown in FIG. 8. In this mode of opening the container C, the entire pull-tab portion 92 will be removed if the segment surrounding the same is held during an opening operation. Otherwise upon the removal of the tear-out portion of the can end the segment and the pull-tab portion will be removed as one unit since the weakening lines 95, 96 will not be fractured.

Reference is now made to FIG. 9 of the drawings which illustrates another carrier 100 which is likewise constructed from molded plastic sheet material, and includes a plurality of interconnected segments 101 through 106 which are arranged in transverse pairs 101, 104; 102, 105; and 103, 106. The adjacent pairs of the segments are interconnected by bridging portions 107, 108. In this embodiment of the invention the segments 101 through 106 constitute pull-tab portions which include projections or bosses 110 and L-shaped locking members 111 which correspond in structure and function identically to the respective elements 53, 57 or the carrier 20.

In order to remove one of the containers C, any one of the pull-tab portions or segments 101 through 106 is simply held and the container C is pulled downwardly to break the associated locking member 111 and subsequently remove the associated tear-out portion through the projection 110 secured thereto. In an alternate mode of operating the carrier 100 any one of the pull-tab portions 101 through 106 can be grasped adjacent the locking member 111 thereof and pulled upwardly while the container C is held to remove the associated tear-out portion. If desirable the segments can be provided with appropriate weakening lines in the form of grooves 112 to facilitate the bending of the segments 101 through 106. The segments may also, of course, be entirely removed by breaking the same along the fold lines 112 to remove a segment prior to an opening operation.

Reference is now made to FIGS. 11 and 12 of the drawings wherein there is illustrated a carrier 120 which is identical to the carrier 20 of FIGS. 1 through 6 except for the provision of a locking member 121 positioned between adjacent pairs of carrier segments 122, 123; 124, 125, etc. Each of the locking members 121 is of a generally inverted T-shaped configuration as viewed in transverse cross section (FIG. 12), and is defined by a leg 126 and a base 127 which define a pair of oppositely opening recesses 130, 131 within which are received the chimes of the containers C. The locking members 121 cooperate with L-shaped locking members 132 to maintain the containers C securely fastened to the carrier 120.

Pull-tab portions 133 of each of the segments are operated in the manner heretofore described relative to the carriers 20, 60 to remove tear-out portions of underlying container closures whereafter it is merely necessary to disengage the container chimes from the locking members 121 to remove the containers from the carrier 120.

While preferred forms and arrangements of parts have been shown in illustrating the invention, it is to be clearly understood that various changes in details and arrangement of parts may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of this disclosure.

We claim:

1. In a package of the type defined by a carrier and a plurality of containers having ends provided with tear-out portions, the improvement comprising means for directly securing the carrier to the tear-out portions in the absence of conventional pull-tabs or similar conventional manual gripping means whereby an opening force can be applied to the tear-out portions through the securing means to remove the tear-out portions in the absence of conventional pull tabs or similar opening devices.

2. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said carrier includes means for applying a manual opening force to the securing means for removing the tear-out portions.

3. The package as defined in claim 1 including means for removing the force applying means and the securing means from the carrier.

4. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said carrier includes means for applying a manual opening force to the securing means for removing the tear-out portions, and said force applying means is a grippable extension of said securing means.

5. The package as defined in claim 1 including additional means for securing the carrier to the containers apart from said first-mentioned securing means.

6. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said carrier is a relatively flat sheet material blank.

7. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said carrier is a relatively flat sheet material blank, and said securing means are integrally formed from the material of said blank.

8. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said tear-out portions include projections, and said securing means are interlockingly secured to said projections.

9. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said securing means are adhesive connections between the carrier and the tear-out portions.

10. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said securing means are fusible connections between the carrier and the tear-out portions.

11. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said carrier includes a plurality of interconnected pull-tab portions, and said securing means secured said pull-tab portions to said tear-out portions.

12. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said carrier includes a plurality of interconnected pull-tab portions, said securing means secure said pull-tab portions to said tear-out portions, and means for removing individual ones of the pull-tab portions from remaining portions of the carriers prior to the removal of the tear-out portions by the application of a manual opening force to the pull-tab portions.

13. The package as defined in claim 12 wherein said removing means are lines of weakness along which the pull-tab portions are broken for removal from the carrier.

14. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said carrier includes a plurality of interconnected pull-tab portions, said securing means secure said pull-tab portions to said tear-out portions, and means for removing individual ones of the pull-tab portions from remaining portions of the carrier during the removal of a manual opening force to the pull-tab portions.

15. The package as defined in claim 14 wherein said removing means are lines of weakness along which the pull-tab portions are broken for removal from the carrier.

16. A carrier for a plurality of containers having ends provided with tear-out portions comprising a plurality of interconnected pull-tab portions, and means directly securing each

pull-tab portion to an associated tear-out portion in the absence of conventional pull-tabs or similar conventional manual gripping means whereby an opening force applied to the tear-out portions through the securing means will remove the tear-out portions from the associated container ends.

17. The carrier as defined in claim 16 wherein said carrier is a relatively flat sheet material blank.

18. The carrier as defined in claim 16 wherein said securing means is defined by aperture means for interlockingly receiving a projection of each tear-out portion.

19. The carrier as defined in claim 16 including means for removing each pull-tab portion from remaining portions of the carrier.

20. The carrier as defined in claim 19 wherein said pull-tab portions are each defined and bounded by lines of weakness for permitting the deflection of the pull-tab portions out of their normal planes incident to the removal of the tear-out portions.

21. The carrier as defined in claim 19 wherein said securing means is defined by means for interlockingly securing each pull-tab portion to a projection of each tear-out portion.

22. The carrier as defined in claim 19 wherein said carrier is a relatively flat sheet material blank.

23. The carrier as defined in claim 16 wherein said pull-tab portions are each defined and bounded by lines of weakness for permitting the deflection of the pull-tab portions out of their normal planes incident to the removal of the tear-out portions.

24. The carrier as defined in claim 23 wherein said securing means is defined by means for interlockingly securing each pull-tab portion to a projection of each tear-out portion.

25. The carrier as defined in claim 23 wherein said carrier is a relatively flat sheet material blank.

26. The carrier as defined in claim 16 wherein said securing means is defined by means for interlockingly securing each pull-tab portion to a projection of each tear-out portion.

27. The carrier as defined in claim 26 wherein said carrier is a relatively flat sheet material blank.

28. A carrier for a plurality of containers having ends provided with tear-out portions comprising a plurality of interconnected pull-tab portions, means securing each pull-tab portion to an associated tear-out portion whereby an opening force applied to the tear-out portions through the securing means will remove the tear-out portions from the associated container ends, and means for removing each pull-tab portion from remaining portions of the carrier.

29. The carrier as defined in claim 28 wherein said pull-tab portions are each defined and bounded by lines of weakness for permitting the deflection of the pull-tab portions out their normal planes incident to the removal of the tear-out portions.

30. A carrier for a plurality of containers having ends provided with tear-out portions comprising a plurality of interconnected pull-tab portions, means securing each pull-tab portion to an associated tear-out portion whereby an opening force applied to the tear-out portions through the securing means will remove the tear-out portions from the associated container ends, and said securing means being defined by aperture means for interlockingly receiving a projection of each tear-out portion.

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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE
# CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Patent No. 3,589,509 Dated June 29, 1971

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It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent are hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 6, read Claim 3 as follows:

--3. The package as defined in claim 1 wherein said carrier includes means for applying a manual opening force to the securing means for removing the tear-out portions and means for removing the force applying means and the securing means from the carrier. --

Signed and sealed this 27th day of March 1973.

(SEAL)
Attest:

EDWARD M.FLETCHER,JR.
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Commissioner of Patents