A multiple pocket storage and travel case includes a center panel which has pockets on one or both sides thereof and further includes a middle section or connecting web intermediate the opposite ends of the center panel which enables the opposite ends of the center panel to be folded in opposite directions so as to expose and to make accessible pockets associated with the opposite sides of the opposite ends of the center section. A shoulder strap is provided which is also reversible to accommodate the reversibility of the arrangement of the pockets of the carrying case.
MULTIPLE POCKET STORAGE AND TRAVEL CASE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] In a principal aspect, the present invention relates to a multiple pocket storage and/or travel case which is especially useful to sportsmen and hobbyists in that it incorporates rigid containers such as plastic containers, in combination with a soft-sided fabric case and thereby provides capacity for storing and carrying multiple rigid containers which are separately and singly removable from the multiple pockets of the soft-sided carrying case.

[0002] Hobbyists and sportsmen often desire to store or pack multi-compartmental plastic containers to carry various items or parts associated with their particular hobby or application. Carrying and transporting these containers to a site for practice of the sport or avocation is considered a necessity by many of these enthusiasts. However, carrying multiple such containers and arranging them and sorting them often present a challenging problem of space and transport management. As a consequence, there has developed a need to provide means for carrying multiple containers in an efficient manner which will enable ease of access to the multiple containers. These, among other desirable characteristics for and by such hobbyists and enthusiasts, have led to the development of the storage and travel case construction described hereinafter.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Briefly, the present invention comprises a storage and travel case or bag which utilizes an elongate center panel having opposite ends with one or two pockets affixed to each end. The panel end pockets are joined by a middle connecting section or web which is flexible thereby enabling the end pockets to be folded over one another in various arrays to enable access to the pockets and to containers, especially rigid containers, inserted into the pockets. The containers may have modular sizes so that multiple containers may be inserted into a single pocket. Various fastening members are disclosed for retaining the rigid containers in the generally flexible pockets. A shoulder strap is disclosed which, in combination with attachment thereof to the middle connecting section or web of the elongate panel, enables carrying of the assembly or case in its various configurations.

[0004] In a preferred embodiment, the center panel includes first and second or dual pockets arrayed on one side at one end thereof and a single pocket on one side of the panel at the opposite end thereof. The single pocket may be folded or arrayed against either side of the other two pockets by folding the center section or web between a first position on one side of the dual pockets to a second position on the opposite side of the dual pockets.

[0005] Thus, it is an object of the invention to provide an inexpensive, yet efficient and reliable construction for carrying of a multiple pocket case having ease of access to the contents of the pockets and which is also convertible to facilitate access to one or more of three pockets incorporated in the carrying case.

[0006] It is a further object of the invention to provide a carrying case which incorporates at least three pockets that may be accessed singly and wherein at least two pockets may be accessed from the top side of the pockets.

[0007] Another object of the invention is to provide a carrying case having at least three pockets all accessed from the top side thereof wherein the top side of each of the pockets is oriented in the same direction and wherein at least two of the pockets may be accessed in one array and at least one of the pockets may be accessed in another array.

[0008] Another object of the invention is to provide a multiple pocket storage and travel case construction which may incorporate more than three pockets and which may further incorporate rigid plastic containers, for example, positioned within the pockets for storage of multiple items within the rigid containers.

[0009] Another object of the invention is to provide a multiple pocket storage and travel case which is fashioned to permit ease of removal of various plastic storage cases, by way of example, located within the separate pockets.

[0010] These and other objects, advantages and features, either collectively or in combination or singly comprise objects and goals of the invention which singly or in combination may provide benefits not found in prior art case constructions.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0011] In the detailed description which follows, reference will be made to the drawings comprised of the following figures:

[0012] FIG. 1 is an isometric view of a first preferred embodiment of the invention as viewed from a front side;

[0013] FIG. 2 is an isometric view of the embodiment of FIG. 1 as viewed from the back side or in a back view;

[0014] FIG. 3 is an isometric view of the embodiment of FIG. 1 depicting the manner in which the embodiment may be reconfigured in order to provide for access to different containers carried by the case;

[0015] FIG. 4 is a further isometric view illustrating the method of conversion of the storage case of FIG. 3;

[0016] FIG. 5 is an isometric view of the embodiment of FIG. 3 fully converted to a different array or second array enabling access to different containers carried by the case;

[0017] FIG. 6 is an isometric view of a second embodiment of the invention illustrating various closures for the container pocket;

[0018] FIG. 7 is an isometric view of yet another embodiment of the invention illustrating alternative means for retaining containers within the pockets of the case;

[0019] FIG. 8 is a further alternative embodiment illustrating the positioning of various stiffening elements in the pockets of the case;

[0020] FIG. 9 is an isometric view of the embodiment of FIG. 8 depicting the manner in which a rigid plastic container or box is inserted or positioned in the carrying case;

[0021] FIG. 10 is an isometric view illustrating further positioning of a container in the embodiment of FIGS. 8 and 9;

[0022] FIG. 11 illustrates the manner of retention of a container within the embodiment of FIGS. 8, 9 and 10; and
FIG. 12 is an isometric view illustrating a further alternative embodiment wherein containers of different configuration, size and/or shape may be incorporated in combination with a carrying case that has been customized in order to receive the differently shaped containers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

FIGS. 1-5 illustrate a first embodiment of the invention. The remaining figures illustrate various combinations and permutations of elements or features which may be incorporated in alternative embodiments. Referring therefore to FIG. 1-5, the carrying case of the invention comprises a soft-sided carry bag or case which is designed to hold plurality of separate containers which are typically rigid containers such as molded, clear plastic containers. Thus, the molded plastic containers may, for example, include a base container section and lid or closure section. Various compartments may be included within the container section. The containers may find utility by a mechanic, tradesman, hobbyist or sportsman for sorting and separating various items such as fishing lures, tools or the like.

The carrying case is comprised of an elongate center panel 20 having a first pocket section 22 at one end of the elongated panel 20 and a second product section 24 at the opposite end thereof. The sections 22 and 24 are joined or connected together by means of a generally flexible web or middle connecting section 26. Typically, the elongate panel 20 is rectangular in shape and formed from a flexible material such as a fabric or a flexible plastic material. It is preferred that the generally flexible middle connecting section or web include flexible portions enabling the middle section to fold in opposite directions as discussed hereinafter.

The first pocket section 20 and the second pocket section 24 may include stiffening members or may be made from a flexible fabric material. The first pocket section 22 preferably includes a flexible, generally parallelepiped pocket 30 affixed to one side thereof. In similar fashion, the second pocket section of the elongate panel 20; namely, the second pocket section 24 includes a second pocket 32 affixed to one side thereof and a third pocket 34 affixed to the opposite side thereof. Preferably, the pockets 30, 32 and 34 are made from the same flexible material as the elongate center panel 20. Stiffening members may be included in various portions or parts of the pockets 30, 32 or 34 as well as in the elongate panel 20.

The web or generally flexible middle connecting section 26 preferably includes a shoulder strap 40 which is attached, typically connecting opposite lateral sides 42 and 44 of the elongate center panel 20. Thus, the shoulder strap 40 may be used to lift and carry the carrying case and its contents regardless of the orientation and folded condition of the case and the pocket sections associated with the case. In other words, the shoulder strap 40 is reversible and may be utilized to carry the case regardless of the particular array or configuration of the pockets 30, 32 and 34.

In the embodiment shown, each of the pockets 30, 32 and 34 are open along top sides thereof so that plastic containers 31, 33 and 35, respectively may be inserted into the pockets 30, 32 and 34, respectively. The containers 31, 33 and 35 are fabricated so that they will easily slide into the pockets 30, 32 and 34. Thus, there is compatibility with respect to the sizing of the containers 31, 33 and 35 in relation to the pockets 30, 32, and 34. A single container is shown in each instance in FIG. 1, for example. However, multiple containers may be inserted into one or more of the pockets 30, 32 and 34. Of course, the size of the pockets 30, 32 and 34 may be varied. The particular configuration of the pockets 30, 32, and 34 may also be varied. Generally parallelepiped pockets 30, 32, and 34 are disclosed. However, the pockets may be semi-circular in shape, or arcuate in shape, or assume various other shapes and configurations correlated with or associated with the shape or configuration of a compatible container. FIG. 12 illustrates such a variation.

The web or center connecting section 26 may be folded as depicted in the sequence of FIGS. 3-5. Such folding enables positioning of the first pocket 30 against one side or the other of the remaining pockets 34 and 32. Thus, the first pocket 30 may be positioned against the pocket 34 as illustrated in FIG. 3 or it may be positioned against the pocket 32 as depicted in FIG. 5. This change in arrangement is reflected merely by rotating or moving the first pocket 30 and the associated first pocket section 22 about the web or middle section 26. In this manner, access to the containers, such as containers 31, 33 and 35 may be easily adjusted to accommodate desires of the user of the carrying case.

Various means may be used for retaining a container, such as container 35, within an associated pocket or pouch, for example, pouch or pocket 34. For example, an elastic cord 50 with a fastener clip 52 may be fitted over a stud 54 associated with the outside of the pocket 34. The elastic cord 50 is attached to the elongate center panel 20. The fastener 52 may be detached from the stud 54 in order to permit removal of the container 35.

FIG. 6 illustrates an alternative arrangement for maintaining a container within a pocket. In FIG. 6, there is depicted a pocket 60 with a cover flap 62 which flexes about a seam 64 where it is attached to a center panel 66. Straps or buckles, snaps or hook and loop fastener may be used to hold the flap 62 closed.

FIG. 7 illustrates yet a further embodiment wherein a zipper attached flap 68 is attached by means of a zipper 70 to the top edge of a pocket 72.

Referring to FIG. 8, there is illustrated in phantom some additional features which may be incorporated in the pockets. A pocket 90 includes a stiffening element 92 sewn into an upper elongate section of the pocket 90. The stiffening element 92 facilitates opening of the pocket 90 for placement of a container therein. Other stiffening elements may also be included. For example, a stiffening element 94 may be incorporated in the middle connecting section 96 as depicted in FIG. 8. FIG. 9 depicts the manner in which a container 98 can then be inserted into a pocket 90. This is further depicted in FIG. 10 wherein the container 98 is inserted into the pocket 90 and the stiffening member 92 facilitates maintenance of the pocket 90 in the open condition. A fastening member 99 may then be utilized to retain the container 98 within the pocket.

FIG. 12 illustrates that various sizes of containers, such as container 102, having various shapes may be utilized in combination with compatible pockets such as pocket 104.
associated with the embodiment of FIG. 12. Additionally, the vertical height of the pockets may be varied, again, as illustrated in FIG. 12. Thus, pockets 106 and 108 have distinct sizes and configurations including height and/or width. Also depicted in FIG. 12 is the inclusion of multiple separate containers, such as containers 110 and 112 in a single pocket 108.

Variations of the invention may be practiced. For example, the pocket sections may include more than a single pocket. Thus, the first pocket section 22 may include pockets on both sides thereof. Further, multiple pockets may be incorporated for each pocket section. The multiple pockets of each pocket section may then be folded about the middle section 26. Thus, it is appropriate and important to size the middle section to permit such folding of the pocket sections 22 over and in opposed relation to the pocket sections 24. The number and array of pockets associated with each section may be variable without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Other unanticipated or unexpected variations of the invention are also to be included within the scope and meaning of the claims, it being understood that the inventors, though diligently attempting to consider all alternatives within the spirit and scope of the invention, realize that such consideration may not always be totally clairvoyant so as to specifically identify such equivalents. Therefore, the invention is to be limited only by the following claims and equivalents thereof.

1. A multiple pocket storage and travel case comprising, in combination:

   a generally elongate center panel having a first pocket section at one end, a second pocket section at the opposite end, and a generally flexible, middle connecting section joining the first end and second end;

   a first pocket affixed to one side of the first pocket section;

   a second pocket affixed to one side of the second pocket section;

   a third pocket affixed to the opposite side of the second pocket section;

   said middle connecting section foldable to effect movement of the first pocket section between a first array with the pockets all folded over one another and the third pocket on an outer side of the array and a second array with the pockets all folded over one another having the third pocket between the first and second pockets.

2. The case of claim 1 wherein the pockets are generally parallelepiped and equally sized.

3. The case of claim 1 wherein the pockets are formed from a flexible material.

4. The case of claim 1 wherein at least one of the pockets includes a removable container.

5. The case of claim 4 wherein the container is a rigid sided closed container.

6. The case of claim 1 further including a handle attached to the middle connection section.

7. The case of claim 6 wherein the handle comprises a strap connected to opposite lateral sides of the center panel.

8. The case of claim 1 wherein each pocket has an open to extending in the same direction when the middle section is positioned in both the first and second array.

9. The case of claim 8 further including a removable container in each pocket.

10. The case of claim 1 further including a retention element connectable to the center panel and at least one pocket to retain an item in said at least one pocket.

11. The case of claim 1 including a separate retention element connectable to the center panel and each pocket.

12. A multiple pocket storage and travel case comprising, in combination:

   a generally elongate, rectangular center panel having a first pocket section at one end, a second pocket section at the opposite end, and a generally flexible, foldable middle connecting section joining the first end and second end;

   a first generally parallelepiped pocket affixed to one side of the first section;

   a second generally parallelepiped pocket affixed to one side of the second pocket section;

   a third generally parallelepiped pocket affixed to the opposite side of the second pocket section;

   a removable, generally rigid, removable container in at least one pocket;

   said middle connecting section foldable to effect movement of the first pocket section between a position opposed to one side of the other pockets and a position opposed to the opposite side of said pockets.

* * * * *