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(12) # EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

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(71) Applicant: Bould, Neville Reuben
10 John Feeney Tower Long Nuke Road
Northfield Birmingham, B31 1EB(GB)

(71) Applicant: Reynolds, Anthony
The Woodcross Woodcross Lane
Coseley West Midlands(GB)

(72) Inventor: Bould, Neville Reuben
10 John Feeney Tower Long Nuke Road
Northfield Birmingham, B31 1EB(GB)

(72) Inventor: Reynolds, Anthony
The Woodcross Woodcross Lane
Coseley West Midlands(GB)

(74) Representative: Healy, Cecilia Patricia
134 Grayswood Avenue
Coventry, CV5 8HQ(GB)

(54) **Container for beverages.**

(57) A container for beverages, particularly mixed drinks including an alcoholic and a mixer component, comprises a single unit (10; 20) which incorporates two container portions (10, 16; 21, 22; 40, 43), for the respective components of the drink. A single closure assembly (13; 24) has two-stage operation, firstly unsealing and opening the container (16; 22; 40) and then allowing access to the mixer component, so that the latter can be added to taste. Three embodiments of container are described.

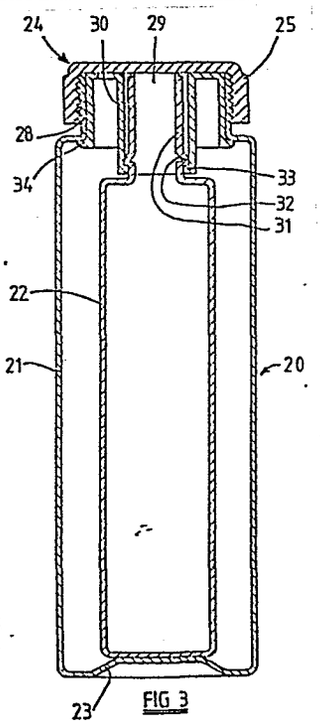

FIG 3

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TITLE: "Container for Beverages"

This invention relates to a container for beverages and specifically for alcoholic "mixed drinks".

In this description, the expression "mixed drink" will be used to describe a drink having two components mixed together, at least one of which is alcoholic, for example a drink such as whisky and soda; gin and tonic; MARTINI (Registered Trade Mark) and lemonade; or brandy and dry ginger ale. The non-alcoholic component will be referred to as the "mixer".

At present, if someone wishes to have a mixed drink at home, it is necessary to buy a bottle of the alcoholic component and a bottle of the mixer, even if only one drink is required. It has been proposed to sell ready-mixed "cocktails" in small individual bottles but these make no allowance for personal taste, in that the proportions of the components are pre-determined before bottling.

Similarly, airlines, train buffets and similar sales outlets where it is inconvenient to supply drinks from standard bottles rely heavily on miniature spirit bottles, served with a separate bottle or can of mixer, to enable the individual customer to mix the desired amounts to taste. Pilfering is also encouraged by the use of large standard bottles. Where used on trains or aeroplanes crossing national borders, Customs clearance may also pose problems.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a container for mixed drinks which is convenient in use

under the circumstances outlined above.

According to the invention, there is provided a container for beverages, the container being a unit comprising two distinct container portions adapted respectively to contain the two components of a mixed drink as herein defined; the container being provided with a single closure assembly which simultaneously closes both of said container portions; the closure assembly being constructed to be openable in two stages; the first stage opening one of said portions adapted to contain an alcoholic component of the drink while retaining the other of said portions closed; and the second stage opening said other portion adapted to contain a mixer component as herein defined.

The closure assembly may comprise two parts, the first stage of opening comprising the step of removing one of said two parts of the closure assembly.

The other of said two parts of the closure assembly may close said other container portion and the second stage of opening may comprise removing or opening said other part of the closure assembly, said other part being inaccessible before the first stage of opening has been carried out.

The two container portions may be formed separately and assembled together to form the container unit.

In this case, the two container portions may be nested within each other.

The inner of the two container portions may be held in position relative to the outer by said other part of the closure assembly.

Said other container portion may be capable of withstanding the internal pressure of a carbonated mixer component. Said one container portion may be disposed within said other container portion.

Alternatively, both of said container portions may be capable of withstanding the internal pressure of a carbonated mixer component, and said other container portion may be disposed within said one container portion.

In an alternative version, the two container portions may be defined by one or more internal partitions within a single hollow body.

At least said other container portion may be capable of withstanding the internal pressure of a carbonated mixer component

Both container portions may be capable of withstanding the internal pressure of a carbonated mixer component and said one container portion may be disposed within said other container portion.

Beverage containers embodying the invention will now be described in more detail by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

FIGURE 1 is a diagrammatic side elevational view of a container for beverages embodying the invention;

FIGURE 2 is a plan view of the container shown in Figure 1;

FIGURE 3 is a vertical sectional view of a further embodiment of container;

FIGURE 4 is a plan view of an inner separator and closure of the container shown in Figure 3;

FIGURE 5 is a vertical sectional view of the inner separator and closure of Figure 4;

FIGURE 6 is a plan view of an external closure of the container shown i Figure 3;

FIGURE 7 is a vertical sectional view of the closure of Figure 6.

FIGURE 8 is a vertical sectional view of an alternative embodiment of container.

Referring to Figures 1 and 2 of the drawings, there is shown a first embodiment of container 10 made of glass or plastic, which is preferably transparent. The container 10 has a triangular shape in cross-section, with upright sides 11a, 11b, 11c. A neck 12 is provided to receive a standard outer closure seal 13 in the form of a screw cap with a crimped neck seal.

Inside the outer container 10, an internal divider or partition is provided in the form of a transverse upright wall 14, which joins the midpoint of one wall 11a to the midpoint of the opposite wall 11b of the container 10. The internal divider or partition also includes a horizontal triangular wall 15, midway between the top and bottom of the container, meeting the transverse wall 14, to define a small internal container portion 16, wholly separated from the remainder of the container by the divider. This portion 16 contains, in use an alcoholic component of a mixed drink, the remainder of the container being filled with a mixer.

The portion 16 is of a standard capacity to comply with regulations on the sale of alcohol.

In addition to the outer closure seal 13, an internal cap (not shown) is used to close off the remainder of the container from the portion 16. The user can remove the closure 13 and pour out the alcoholic component. Subsequently, the internal cap is opened to add as much mixer as required to suit personal taste.

Although the triangular shape described above is optional, it enables the containers to be closely packed together for use in confined spaces such as on aircraft, without waste of space.

The internal divider may be a flexible internal container, instead of a rigid dividing wall or walls.

In a further embodiment shown in Figures 3 to 7, a container is shown at 20 and comprises an outer container portion 21 and an inner container portion 22. Each of the container portions 21 and 22 is made of a synthetic plastics material which is such as to be capable of withstanding the internal pressure of a carbonated drink without damage. The base 23 of the outer container portion 21 is indented for extra strength and rigidity.

A closure assembly is provided, generally indicated at 24. This closure assembly comprises two parts, which are shown in more detail in Figures 4 to 7.

One part of the closure assembly 24 is an outer screw closure cap 25, which is preferably provided with a crimped seal to ensure that the contents of the container are not tampered with after filling, until finally used. The closure cap 25 is shown in Figures 6 and 7 and is internally screw-threaded at 26. Grip-improving formations 27 are provided around its periphery.

The closure cap 25 is screwed onto a corresponding screw-thread provided externally on a neck 28 of the outer container portion 21.

The inner container portion 22 is nested concentrically within the outer container portion 21 and seats on the indented base 23. The top opening 29 of the inner container portion 22 is closed off only by the outer screw closure cap 25 as shown in Figure 3.

An inner, generally annular separator 30 surrounds a neck 31 of the inner container portion 22. This separator is shown in more detail in Figures 4 and 5 of the drawings. The neck 31 has an outwardly-directed annular rib 32, which is snap-engaged by an inwardly-directed annular lip 33 on the separator 30. Thus, the separator 30 is snap-engaged around the neck 31 of the inner container portion 22.

This sub-assembly is then inserted into the outer container portion 21. An outwardly-directed annular flange 34 of the separator can be snap-engaged beneath the neck 28 of the outer container portion 21, to complete assembly of the container.

It will be seen that the inner container portion 22 has a substantially smaller volume than the space remaining between itself and the outer container portion 21. The inner container portion is filled with an alcoholic component of a mixer drink, and the remaining space of the outer container portion is filled with a mixer.

The separator 30 is provided with a plug-type seal 35, shown in Figure 5. This is only accessible after the outer screw cap 25 has been removed.

The sealed container 20 can be carried and sold as a unit, for example on aeroplanes or trains, in buffets at transport centres, in fast-food restaurants or in ordinary liquor retail outlets.

To use the contents, the seal is firstly broken and the screw cap 25 removed. This allows the spirits or other alcoholic component in the inner container portion to be poured out. When this has been completed, the plug-type seal 35 is pulled out of the separator 30 and as much of the mixer drink as required by personal taste is poured out of the outer container portion.

Figure 8 of the drawings shows a further version of the container, similar in many respects to that of Figures 3 to 7, but with the inner container portion containing the carbonated mixer component of the beverage. Because of the carbonation of this component, it may be advisable to use this arrangement, to avoid distortion of the assembly between the introduction of the carbonated mixer component and that of the alcoholic component, which could occur if the alcoholic component is housed in a flexible-walled container portion within the container portion housing the mixer.

The outer container portion 40 has an indentation 41 in its base, to provide a seating 42 for the inner container portion 43. The latter is larger than the inner portion of the previously-described embodiment, since it is generally required that the mixer should be supplied in larger quantities than the alcoholic component.

The carbonated mixer component is filled into the inner container portion 43, which is then closed off with a closure cap 44. The outer container portion 40 is then filled with the alcoholic component through a

filler hole in a separator 45, which mounts the inner and outer container portions 40 and 43 relative to each other in a manner similar to that used in the previously-described embodiment.

The whole assembly is then sealed by an outer cap 46 which is internally screw-threaded to co-operate with mating external threads on the neck of the outer container portion. A seal may also be applied to the cap to comply with Customs regulations.

CLAIMS:

1. A container for beverages, characterised in that the container (20) is a unit comprising two distinct container portions (21, 22) adapted respectively to contain the two components of a mixed drink as herein defined; the container being provided with a single closure assembly (24) which simultaneously closes both of said container portions (21, 22); the closure assembly (24) being constructed to be openable in two stages; the first stage opening one of said portions (22) adapted to contain an alcoholic component of the drink while retaining the other of said portions (21) closed; and the second stage opening said other portion (21) adapted to contain a mixer component as herein defined.

2. A container for beverages according to claim 1 and further characterised in that the closure assembly (24) comprises two parts (25, 30), the first stage of opening comprising the step of removing one (25) of said two parts of the closure assembly (24).

3. A container for beverages according to claim 2 and further characterised in that the other (30) of said two parts of the closure assembly closes said other container portion (21) and the second stage of opening comprises removing or opening said other part (30) of the closure assembly (24), said other part (30) being inaccessible before the first stage of opening has been carried out.

4. A container for beverages according to any preceding claim further characterised in that the two container portions (21, 22) are formed separately and assembled together to form the container unit (20).

5. A container for beverages according to claim 4 further characterised in that the two container portions (21, 22) are nested within each other.

6. A container for beverages according to claim 5 further characterised in that the inner of the two container portions (22) is held in position relative to the outer (21) by said other part (30) of the closure assembly.

7. A container for beverages according to any one of claims 1 to 3 and further characterised in that the two container portions (10, 16) are defined by one or more internal partitions (14, 15) within a single hollow body (10).

8. A container for beverages according to any preceding claim and further characterised in that said other container portion (21) is capable of withstanding the internal pressure of a carbonated mixer component.

9. A container for beverages according to claim 8 further characterised in that both container portions (21, 22) are capable of withstanding the internal pressure of a carbonated mixer component and said one container portion (22) is disposed within said other container portion (21).

10. A container for beverages according to claim 8 further characterised in that said other container portion (43) is disposed within said one container portion (40).

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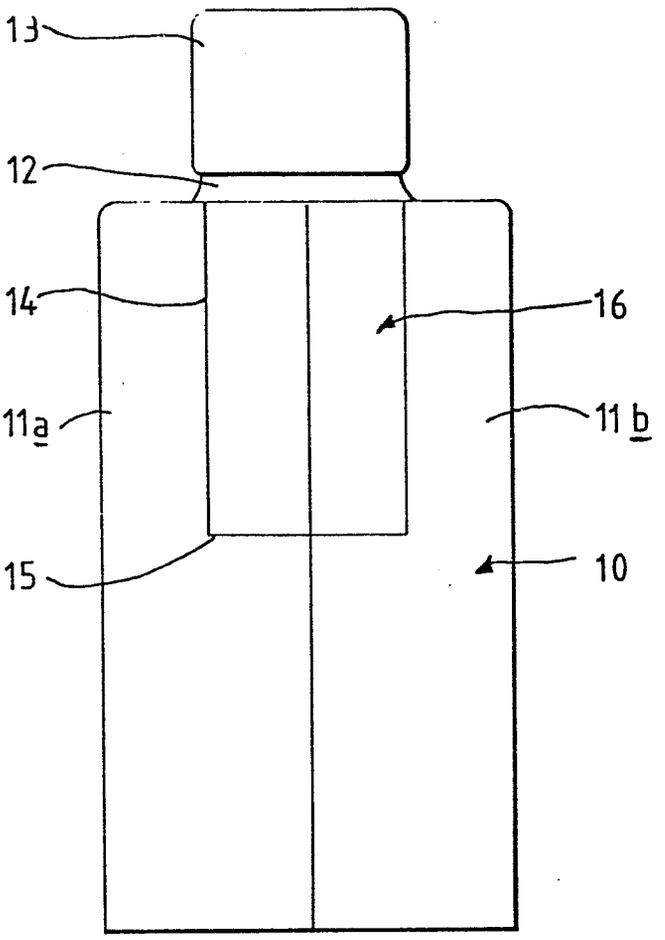

FIG 1

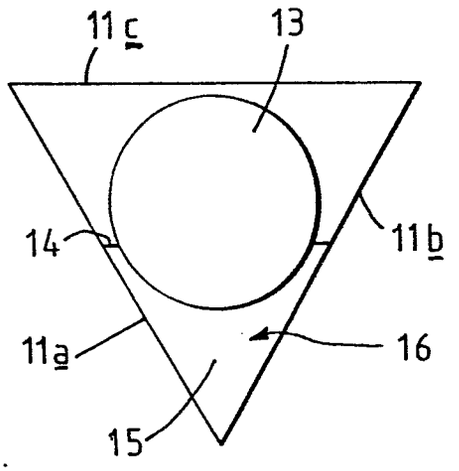

FIG 2

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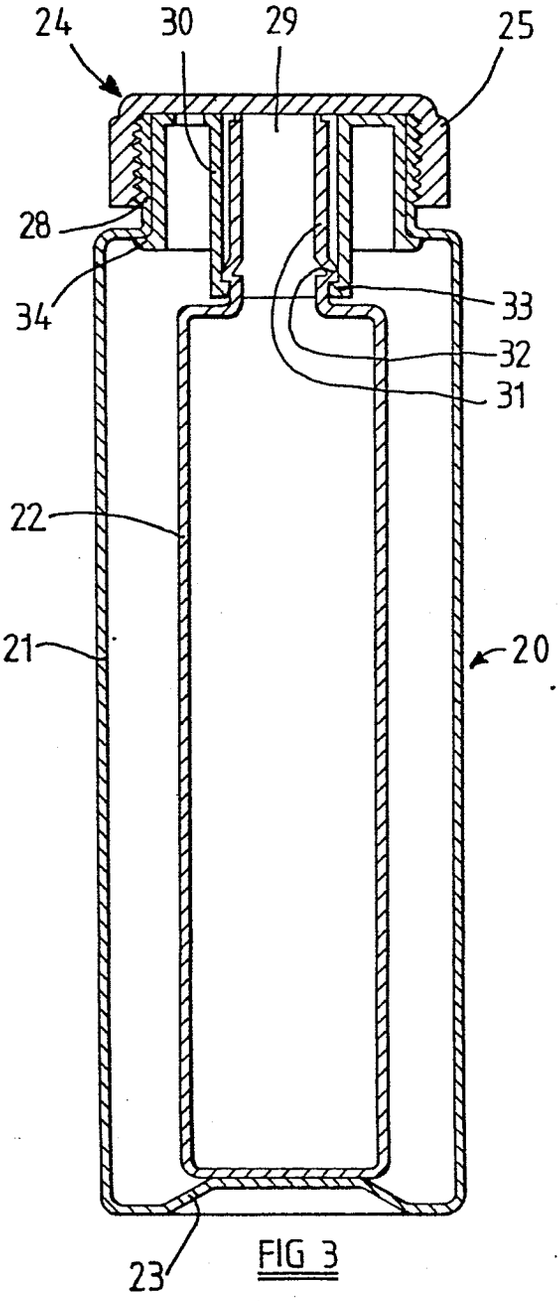

FIG 3

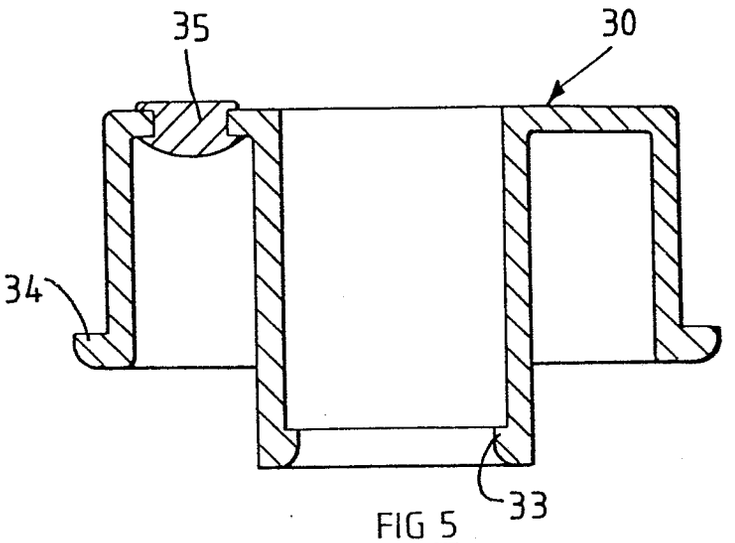

FIG 5

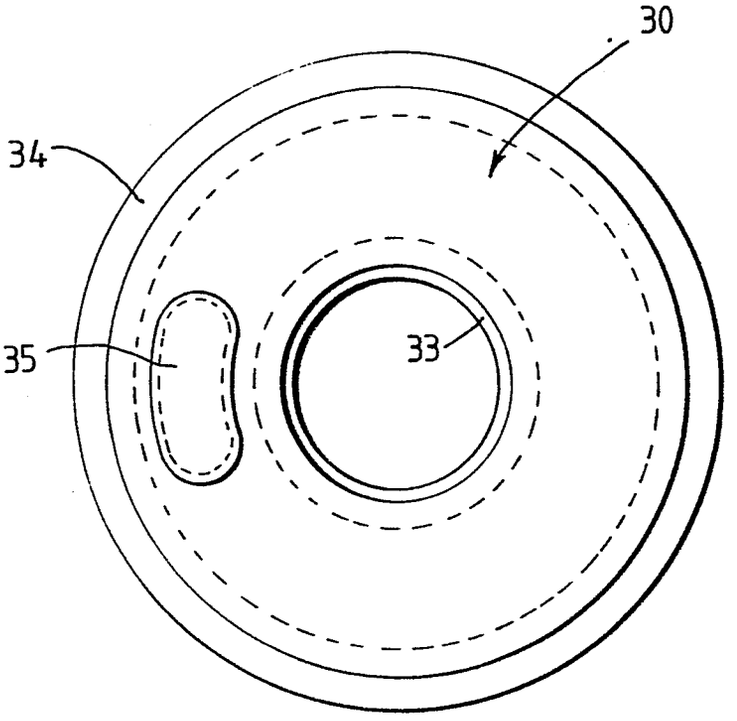

FIG 4

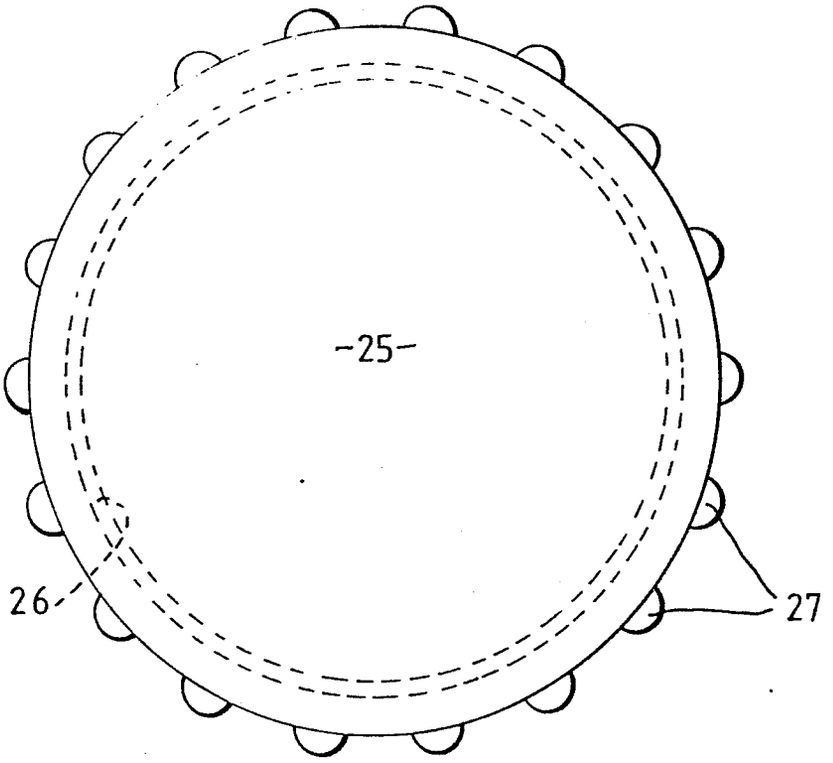

FIG 6

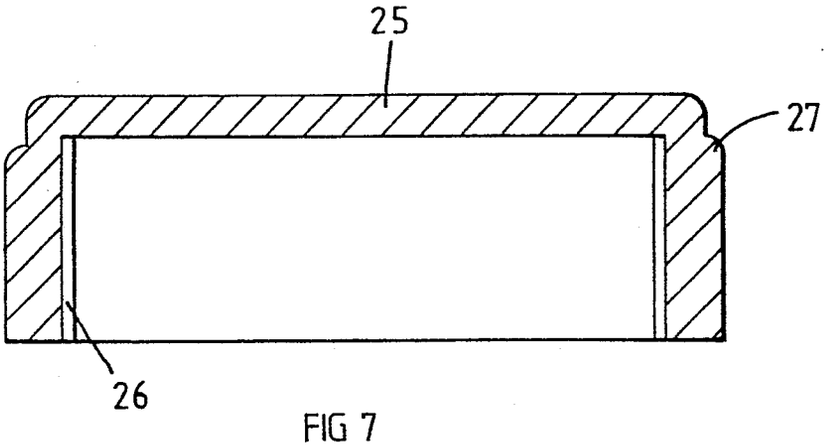

FIG 7

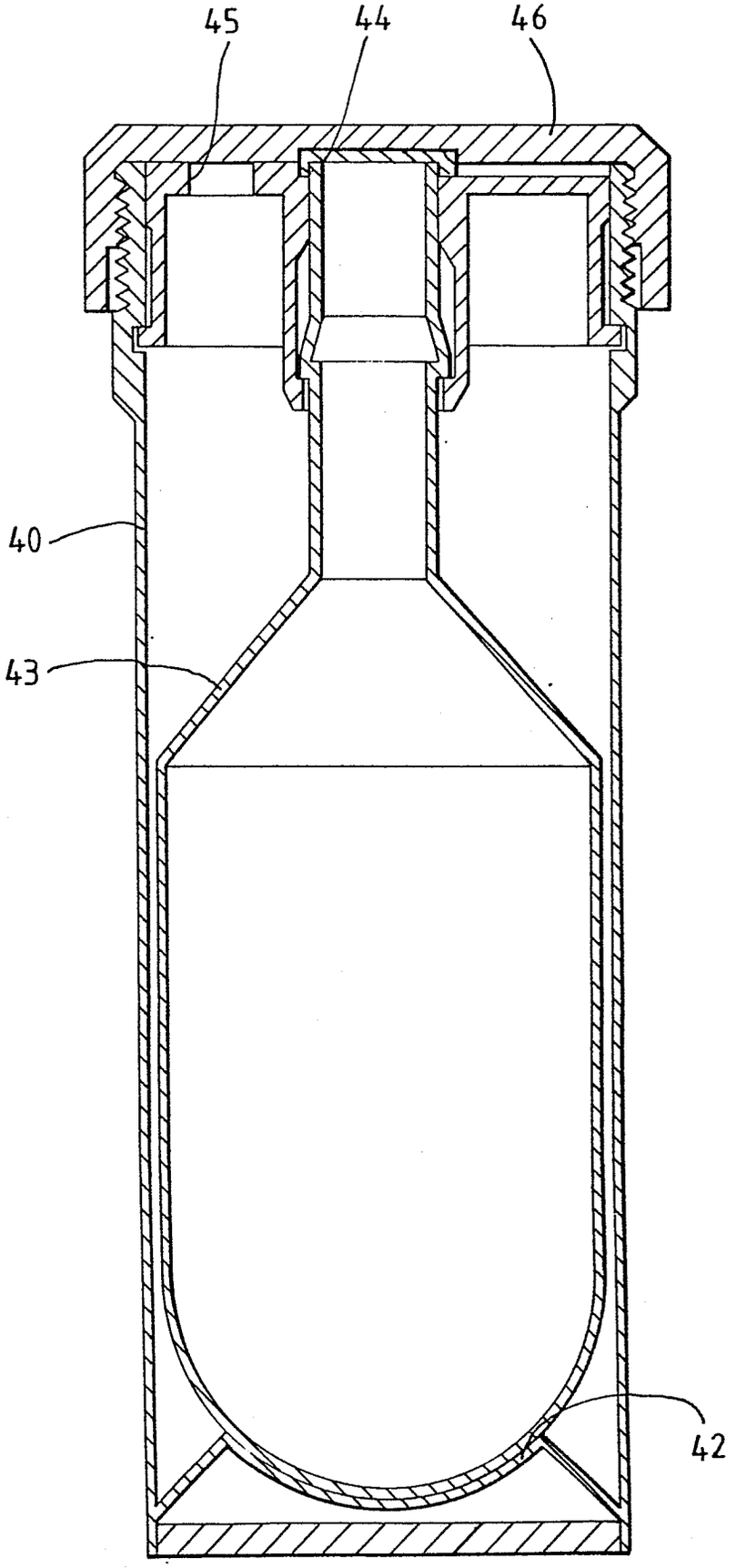

FIG 8

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

0117948
Application number

EP 83307280.4

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. ³)
X	FR - A - 1 224 465 (DOMEC & CIE) * Fig. 1 *	1,2,3	B 65 D 25/04 B 65 D 81/32
X	US - A - 1 418 814 (LUTZ UND FOLSOM) * Totality *	1,2,4,5,6	
X	FR - A - 321 914 (CHAMBON) * Totality, especially fig. 1,2*	1,2,3,4,5,6	
X	GB - A - 1 138 690 (PROCTER & GAMBLE LIMITED) * Totality *	1,2,4,5,6	
A	US - A - 2 412 833 (PRAGER) * Fig. 2,3,4 *	1,4,5,6	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl. ³) B 65 D
A	FR - A - 1 201 115 (RIFFET, DAMIDOT ET CHILD) * Fig. 1 *	1,4,5,6	
A	DE - B - 1 288 473 (DIWO) * Totality *	1,2,4	

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
VIENNA	16-05-1984	CZUBA

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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