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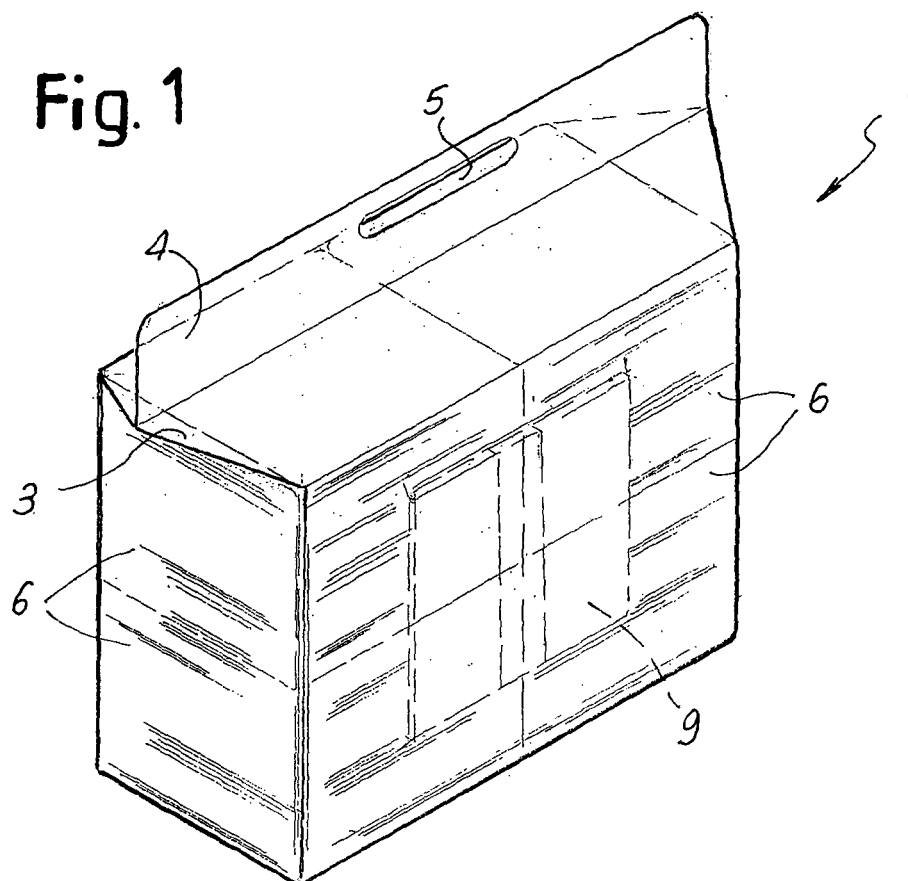
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(54) **Container for paper napkins and package of paper napkins comprising said container**

(57) There is disclosed a multiple package (1) of packs of napkins (6), with which there is associated a

container or dispenser (9) for said napkins, produced in sheet material folded in a collapsed position and expandable in a using position.



Description

Technical field

[0001] The present invention relates to the field of disposable paper products, in particular for domestic use. Specifically, the present invention relates to the field of paper napkins or similar products. The term paper napkins is intended within the context of the present description and of the appended claims as any product made of paper, preferably tissue paper, folded and stacked to form packs of articles.

Background art

[0002] Currently paper napkins are usually packaged in packages containing a variable number of folded napkins, for example 25, 50, 100, 250 napkins, of variable dimensions, for example from 15x15 to 40x40 cm. Each package is closed by a plastic film. When the package is opened tearing the plastic film, the napkins remain devoid of container, can become soiled and the stack of napkins forming the package is disarranged. For practical use of this type of consumable material dispensers or containers have been produced, into which the individual stacks of folded napkins are inserted. These containers or dispensers usually have the shape of an open tray, with plan dimensions equal to the dimensions of the single folded napkin. In some cases the container is equipped with a retaining element for the napkins, such as a metal bar, which prevents the napkins from spilling or flying about, for example when the container is intended for outdoor use.

[0003] Other products, in particular interleaved paper handkerchiefs, are packaged in individual cardboard boxes, which present a slot protected by a portion of cardboard detachable along a perforation line. This type of packaging is costly, as each group of handkerchiefs must be equipped with a box, which represents a cost in terms of material and also makes the packaging process more complex, lengthy and costly.

Summary of the invention

[0004] The subject matter of the present invention is a new method of packaging and of using paper napkins, which totally or partly overcomes the drawbacks to which the use of these products is normally subject.

[0005] Substantially, according to one aspect, the invention provides for a multiple package of packs of napkins, associated with which is a container or dispenser for said napkins, produced in sheet material folded in the collapsed position and expansible in the using position. The container or dispenser is preferably housed inside a bag, produced for example in paper or plastic film, in which said individual packs or packages of napkins are contained.

[0006] The container or dispenser can be made of

plastic sheet material, creased and welded. Preferably, however, also for reasons of environmental impact, the container or dispenser is made of cardboard of adequate grammage. This allows it to be easily recycled.

[0007] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the container or dispenser comprises a body and a cover, each produced from a respective piece of folded sheet material. In this way, the container or dispenser can be more easily and rapidly taken to the using position, simply by lifting, with respect to the respective bottom of the body and of the cover, the lateral sides which, during production, have been formed by folding and gluing or welding.

[0008] In an advantageous embodiment, the container or dispenser presents a tab openable by tearing along a perforation line, to form an opening for removing the napkins from the container. The tab can remain constrained to the cover, for example along a crease line after tearing along the perforation line, so as to form a non-removable protective element, which closes the opening for removing the napkins, nonetheless allowing easy removal thereof. To obtain a wide and practical opening, in one embodiment, the body has a recessed edge, the shape of which preferably corresponds to a portion of the edge of the opening defined by the tab in the cover intended to close the body of the container or dispenser.

[0009] In an advantageous embodiment, the body and the cover each respectively present a bottom and four lateral sides. Preferably, the tab of the cover is produced partly on the bottom and partly on one of the sides of the cover.

[0010] Although it is preferably to package the container or dispenser together with the packs or packages of napkins, it would also be possible to use the container or dispenser individually, i.e. separately with respect to the packages of napkins. For example, it could be provided as advertising or promotional means, or as a gadget to be given as free gift to the customer following the purchase of a certain number of packages of napkins and/or similar articles.

[0011] Further features and embodiments of the invention will be described below with reference to an example of embodiment.

Brief description of the drawings

[0012] The invention will be better understood by following the description and accompanying drawing, which shows a non-limiting practical embodiment of the invention. More in particular, in the drawing:

Fig. 1 shows a perspective view of a bag or multiple package containing a container or dispenser.

Fig.2 shows a perspective view of a dispenser or container of napkins in the folded position in which it is inserted into the multiple pack or bag of Fig.1; Figs.3 and 4 show in an unfolded position the punched sheets intended to form the upper part or

cover and the lower part or body of the container or dispenser of Fig.2;

Fig.5 shows an intermediate step of the operation to fold and glue the body or lower part of the container or dispenser; and

Fig.6 shows an exploded view of the container or dispenser with a stack or package of napkins to be inserted therein.

Detailed description of an embodiment

[0013] Fig.1 shows a multiple package or bag indicated as a whole with 1. In some embodiments, the multiple package 1 is formed by a folded and welded sheet or film of plastic material 3, with which it is also possible to form an upper strip 4, in which a handle 5 is produced by cutting. A plurality of individual packs or packages 6 of napkins is arranged inside the film or sheet 3. In the example shown the pack 1 contains four individual packs or packages 6, but it would also be possible to produce multiple packages 1 with a different number of individual packs or packages.

[0014] In some embodiments, each individual pack or package 6 of napkins is formed conventionally with a welded external film or sheet of plastic material which encloses the stack of napkins. It would also be possible to produce the packaging, i.e. the sheet that enclose the individual package 6 and/or the multiple package 1, in a different material, such as paper, in which case closing can take place in a different way, for example by gluing.

[0015] Preferably, inside the multiple bag or package 1 a folded container or dispenser is placed, indicated as a whole with 9, into which the user can insert the individual packages 6, after having removed the outer film or wrapping therefrom.

[0016] The container or dispenser 9 is comprised of two parts, each formed by a sheet of laminate material, punched, creased, folded and glued or welded in a suitable manner, so that the ready-to-use container can be obtained simply by opening and assembling the two portions of which it is formed and which are packaged in the collapsed or folded position in the multiple bag or package 1. In Fig.2 the container or dispenser is shown in the folded position, in which it is housed in the multiple pack 1.

[0017] The structure of the container or dispenser 9 and the manner in which it is constructed and used will be described in detail below with reference to Figs.3, 4, 5, 6.

[0018] Fig.6 shows in an exploded view, a pack or stack P of napkins and the dispenser 9 formed by an upper part or cover 9A and by a lower part or body 9B. The body or lower part 9B is shaped as a tray with a bottom and four sides, into which the stack P of folded napkins T is inserted. The stack P can be formed of the whole individual package 6, or even by a fraction of said package. It would also be possible to produce the container 9 of greater height than the package 6, to insert therein more than one individual package of napkins. The

protective wrapping or plastic film (or the like) is removed from the stack P of napkins T prior to insertion thereof in the lower part or body 9B of the dispenser or container 9.

[0019] The lower body 9B presents a parallelepiped shape with a dimension in the top view corresponding to the dimension of the napkin T. One of the edges thereof is cut to form a wide recess 9C, which serves to facilitate removal of the single napkins from the container 9.

[0020] The lateral walls or sides and the bottom of the body or lower part 9B of the container are produced from suitable folded portions of a punched sheet shown in the spread out position thereof in Fig.4, and which will be described in greater detail below.

[0021] The cover or upper part 9A of the container or dispenser 9 presents a shape similar to that of the body or lower part 9B, but of slightly greater dimension, so that it can be fitted to the body or lower part 9B with the sides thereof on the outside with respect to the sides of the body 9B. The cover 9A is obtained from a punched sheet shown in the spread out position in Fig.3 and described in greater detail below.

[0022] With reference to Fig.4, the punched sheet intended to form the body or lower part 9B of the container 9, also indicated with 9B, presents an approximately square area, with a square central portion 9.1 that forms the bottom of the container. The square central portion 9.1 is delimited by two mutually opposed and parallel crease lines 9.2. and by two crease lines 9.3 orthogonal to the lines 9.2. Along the two crease lines 9.2 there are connected to the central portion 9.1 two appendages 9.4 which, once folded along the crease lines 9.2 through 90° to be positioned orthogonally to the central portion 9.1, form two of the four sides (again indicated with 9.4 in Fig. 6) of the body 9B of the container or dispenser 9.

[0023] One of the two appendages 9.4 is cut to form the shaped edge 9C mentioned above.

[0024] Two shaped tabs 9.6 are connected to the appendages 9.4, along the crease lines 9.5, orthogonal to the crease lines 9.2. When the container (Fig.9) is in the assembled condition, the crease lines 9.5 define the corners of the body or lower part 9B.

[0025] Connected to the quadrangular central portion 9.1, along the crease lines 9.3, there are two lateral appendages 9.7, each of which is delimited by two respective inclined crease lines 9.9, which represent fold lines of triangular tabs 9.10. The triangular tabs 9.10 can be folded through 180° along the crease lines 9.9 to fold them down against the respective appendages 9.7 in order to allow folding the body 9B of the container 9 in a collapsed position after the punched sheet has been folded and glued in the manner described below to form the body 9B.

[0026] The body 9B is obtained from the punched sheet 9B of Fig.4 by reciprocally gluing each tab 9.6 to the contiguous triangular tab 9.10. This operation can take place with the use of normal paper converting machines. Fig.5 shows an intermediate step of the operation to glue the body 9B of the container 9. The tabs 9.6 have

been folded down with folds along the crease lines 9.5 against the corresponding appendages 9.4. The appendages 9.7 have been folded down by folding along the crease lines 9.3 against the central portion 9.1, and the triangular tabs 9.10 have been folded down along the lines 9.9 against the face of the appendages 9.7 opposite the one in contact with the portion 9.1.

[0027] Having reached this position, a glue can be applied to the free surfaces of the triangular tabs 9.10 and/or to the exposed surfaces of the tabs 9.6. In Fig.5, the glue, indicated with C, has been applied to the triangular tabs 9.10.

[0028] The assembly is completed by folding down the appendages 9.4, with folds along the crease lines 9.2, against the central portion 9.1. The tabs 9.6 remain between the appendages 9.4 and the tabs 9.10.

[0029] The punched sheet 9A (Fig.3) which serves to form the upper part 9A or cover of the container 9 is cut and creased analogously and is folded and glued with a procedure analogous to the one described above. In Fig. 3 the portions of the punched sheet 9A corresponding to those of the punched sheet 9B are indicated with the same reference numbers increased by 10. Therefore, the central portion corresponding to the portion 9.1 of the punched sheet 9B is indicated with 19.1 etc.

[0030] As can be observed by comparing Figs. 3 and 4, the two punched sheets 9A, 9B are substantially identical, except for the fact the punched sheet 9A has no slot or recess 9C and instead is provided with a perforation line 9D, which delimits, together with a crease line 19.12, a tab 9G. There is also provided a cut line 9E that forms a hole 9F.

[0031] In Fig.6 the various portions of the cover or upper part 9A are indicated with the same reference numbers used in Fig.3. As can be understood from Fig.6, once the pack or stack P of napkins T has been inserted in the lower part 9B of the container 9, this is closed with the cover 9A, from which the tab 9G is detached along the perforation line 9D. The tab 9G thus remains secured and hinged to the cover 9A along the crease line 19.12 and can be opened and closed to protect the napkins T and allow easy removal thereof through the wide slot left free by the tab 9G and by the recess 9C.

[0032] In the folded or collapsed position, the two upper and lower parts 9A, 9B of the container or dispenser 9 take a dimension equal to the dimension of the two bottom portions 9.1 and 19.1 respectively, and a maximum thickness equal to five times the thickness of the laminate material (for example, cardboard or card), in which the punched sheets that form the two portions of the container or dispenser are produced. These two folded portions can be placed mutually adjacent and joined, for example by a strip 10 (Fig.2), for example made of paper or other recyclable material and be inserted in the multiple package 1 during the normal packaging operation.

[0033] When the first individual package 6 is used, the user opens the strip 10, separates the two portions or

parts 9A, 9B of the dispenser or container and places them in the expanded or spread out position, as shown in Fig.6, if necessary also breaking the perforation line 9D that keeps the tab 9B joined along the entire edge thereof to the cover 9A. After inserting the pack or stack P of napkins T in the lower part 9B of the container or dispenser, this can be closed by fitting the cover 9A thereover. The tab 9G protects the napkins T contained in the container and at the same time allows easy removal thereof, simply by lifting.

[0034] It is understood that the drawing only shows a practical embodiment of the invention, which can vary in shapes and arrangements without however departing from the scope of the concept underlying the invention. Any reference numbers in the claims below are provided purely to facilitate reading thereof in the light of the description above and of the accompanying drawings, and do not in any way limit the scope of protection defined by the claims.

Claims

1. A multiple package of packs of napkins, combined with a container or dispenser for said napkins, produced in sheet material folded in a collapsed position and expansible in a using position.
2. Package according to claim 1, wherein said container or dispenser is housed inside a bag in which said packs of napkins are contained.
3. Package according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said container or dispenser is made of cardboard.
4. Package according to claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein said container comprises a body and a cover, each produced from a respective piece of folded sheet material.
5. Package according to one or more of the preceding claims, wherein said cover has a tab openable by tearing along a perforation line, to form an opening for removing the napkins from the container.
6. Package according to claim 5, wherein said body presents a recessed edge, the shape of which is such as to correspond with a portion of the edge of the opening defined by said tab.
7. Package according to claim 5 or 6, wherein said tab is connected to the cover along a crease or fold line, to remain stably constrained to said cover after opening by tearing along said perforation line.
8. Package according to one or more of claims 4 to 7, wherein said body and said cover each respectively present a bottom and four lateral sides.

9. Package according to claims 5 and 8, wherein said tab of the cover is produced partly on the bottom and partly on one of the sides of the cover.
10. Package according to claims 6 and 9, wherein said recessed edge is produced in one of the sides of the body of said container or dispenser.
11. Package according to one or more of claims 8 to 10, wherein:
- a first pair of opposed sides of said body and of said cover are produced by appendages of sheet material joined to the bottom along respective fold or crease lines;
 - each of said appendages forming the first pair of opposed sides is joined to two lateral tabs along respective fold or crease lines;
 - a second pair of opposed sides of said body and of said cover are each produced by a respective further appendage joined to the bottom along fold or crease lines and by two triangular lateral tabs joined by fold or crease lines to said further appendages;
 - each of said lateral tabs joined to the appendages forming the first pair of sides is connected to a respective triangular tab.
12. Package according to claim 11, wherein said lateral tabs joined to the appendages forming the first pair of sides are connected to the triangular tabs by gluing.
13. A container or dispenser for napkins, comprising a body and a cover which can be mutually superposed, produced in a folded sheet material and suitable to take a collapsed position and a spread out position, said cover and said body being reciprocally couplable in said spread out position to define a closed volume into which to insert said napkins.
14. Container or dispenser according to claim 11, made of cardboard.
15. Container or according to claim 13 or 14, wherein said body and said cover are each formed by a respective piece of folded sheet material.
16. Container or dispenser according to one or more of claims 13 to 15, wherein said cover presents a tab openable by tearing along a perforation line, to form an opening for removing said napkins from the container.
17. Container or dispenser according to claim 16, wherein said body presents a recessed edge, the shape of which is such as to correspond with a portion of the edge of the opening defined by said tab.
18. Container or dispenser according to claim 16 or 17, wherein said tab is connected to the cover along a crease or fold line, to remain stably constrained to said cover after opening by tearing along said perforation line.
19. Container or dispenser according to one or more of claims 13 to 18, wherein said body and said cover each respectively present a bottom and four lateral sides.
20. Container or dispenser according to claims 16 and 19, wherein said tab of the cover is produced partly on the bottom and partly on one of the sides of the cover.
21. Container or dispenser according to claims 17 and 19, wherein said recessed edge is produced in one of the sides of the body of said container or dispenser.
22. Container or dispenser according to one or more of claims 19, 20 and 21, wherein:
- a first pair of opposed sides of said body and of said cover are formed by appendages of sheet material joined to the bottom along respective fold or crease lines;
 - each of said appendages forming the first pair of opposed sides is joined to two lateral tabs along respective fold or crease lines;
 - a second pair of opposed sides of said body and of said cover are each formed by a respective further appendage joined to the bottom along fold or crease lines and by two triangular lateral tabs joined by fold or crease lines to said further appendages;
 - each of said lateral tabs joined to the appendages forming the first pair of sides is connected to a respective triangular tab.
23. Container according to claim 22, wherein said lateral tabs joined to the appendages forming the first pair of sides are connected to the triangular tabs by gluing.

Fig. 1

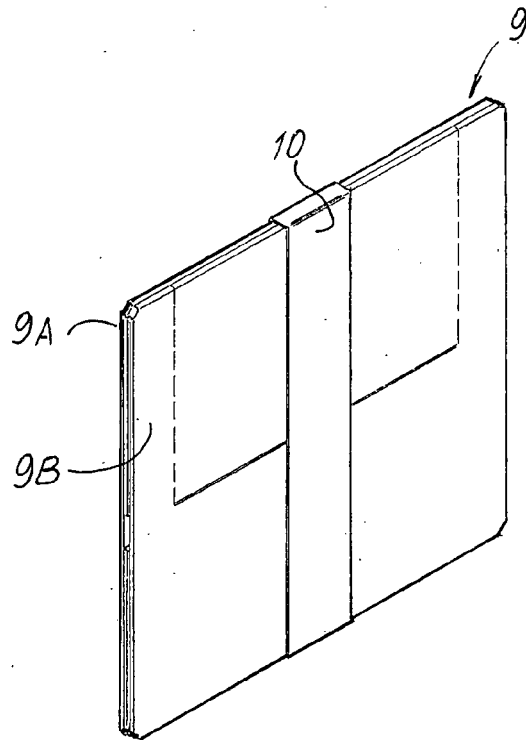
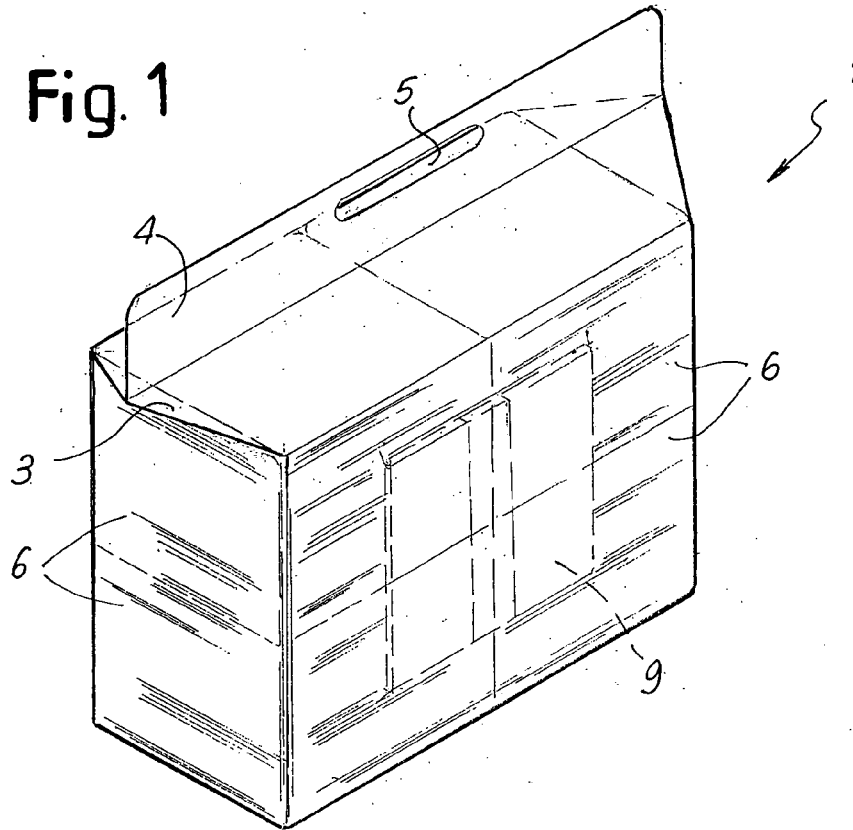


Fig. 2

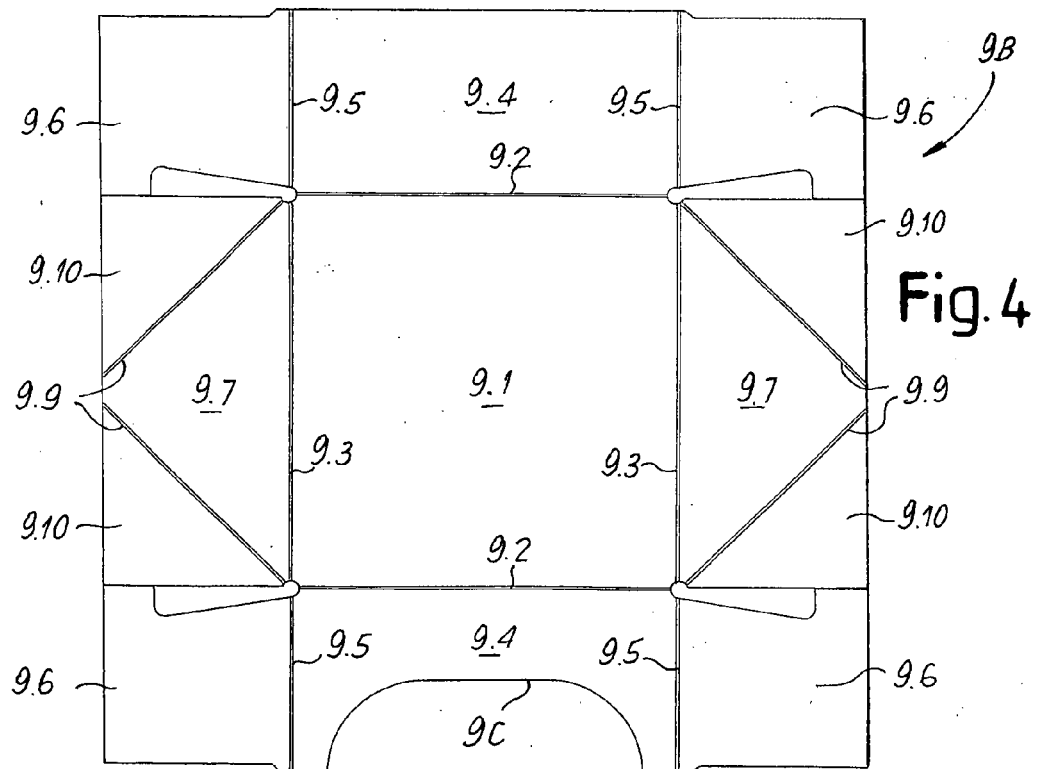
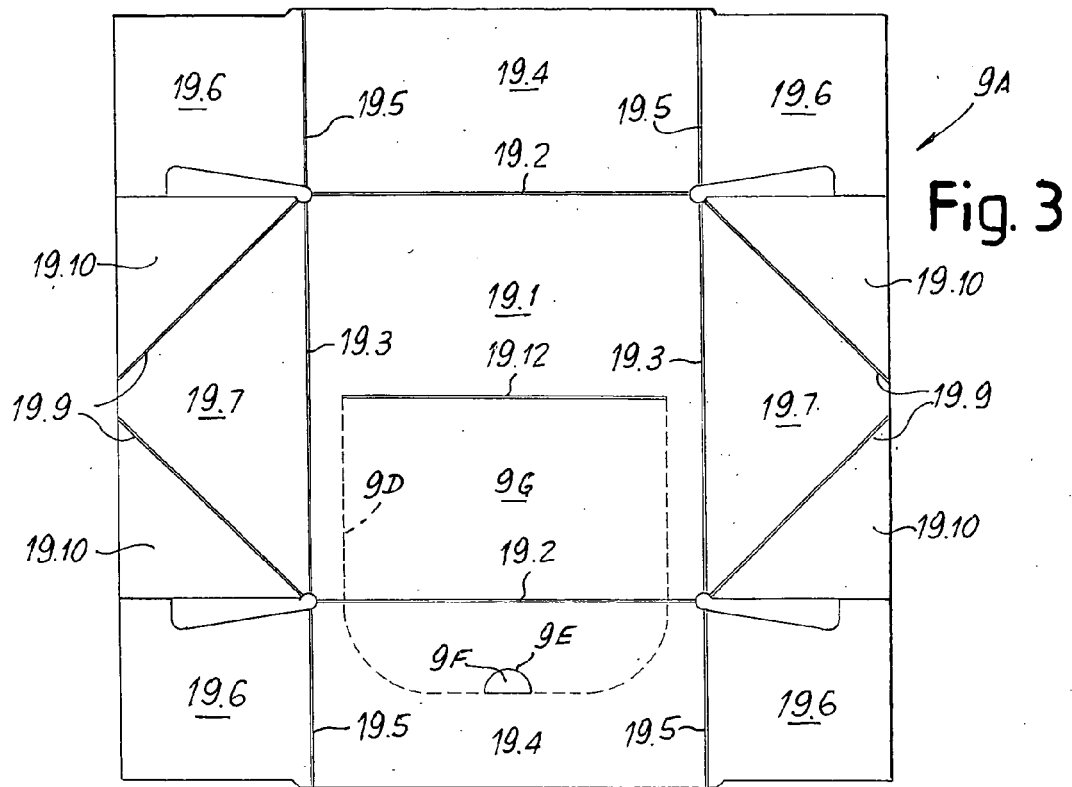
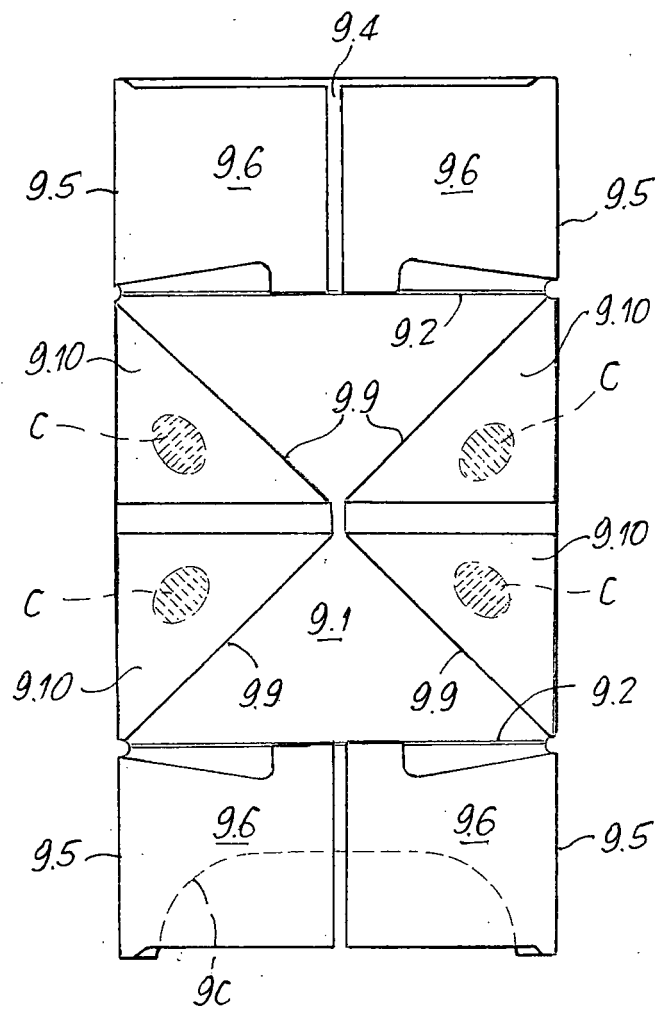
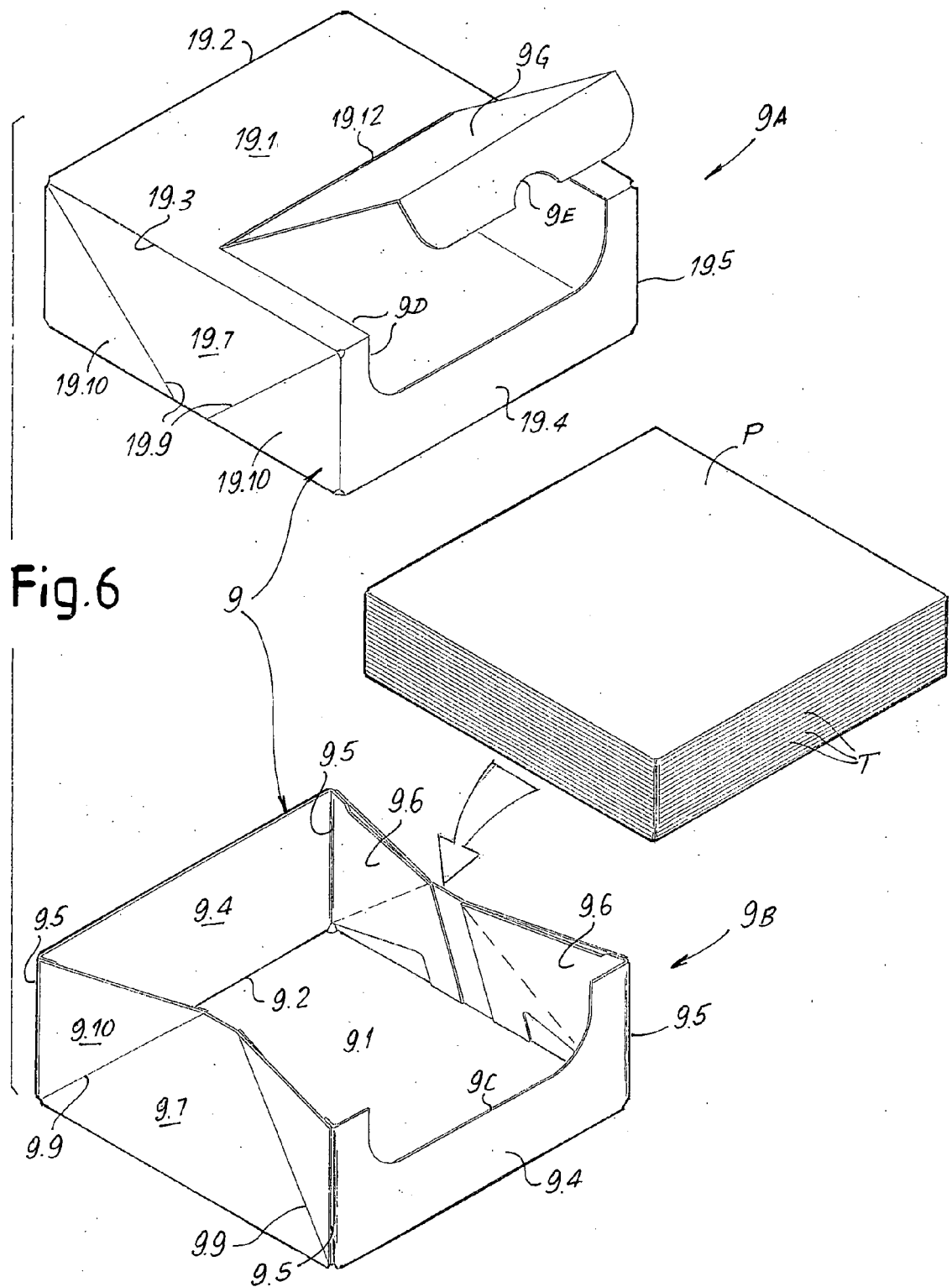


Fig.5







EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 08 42 5489

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
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Y	* abstract; figures *	2-12	B65D5/36
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X	DE 201 13 634 U1 (DIETER SCHAEFER KARTONAGENFABR [DE]) 29 November 2001 (2001-11-29)	13-17, 19-23	B65D5/68
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A	* abstract; figures *	2-5,7,8, 11,12	

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			B65D
2			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague		6 November 2008	Serrano Galarraga, J
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

EPO FORM 1503 03/82 (P04C01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 08 42 5489

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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06-11-2008

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