

United States Patent

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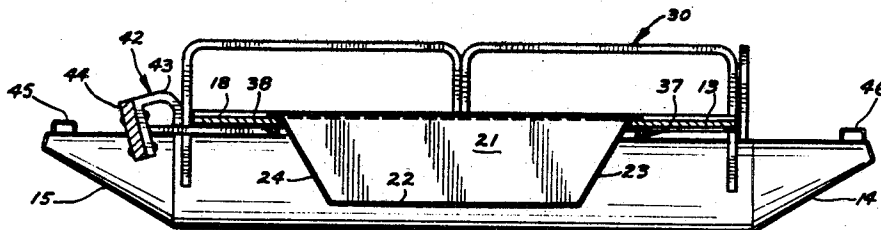
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[54] **PONTOON BOAT**
4 Claims, 5 Drawing Figs.

[52] U.S. Cl..... 114/61
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[50] Field of Search..... 114/61; 9/5

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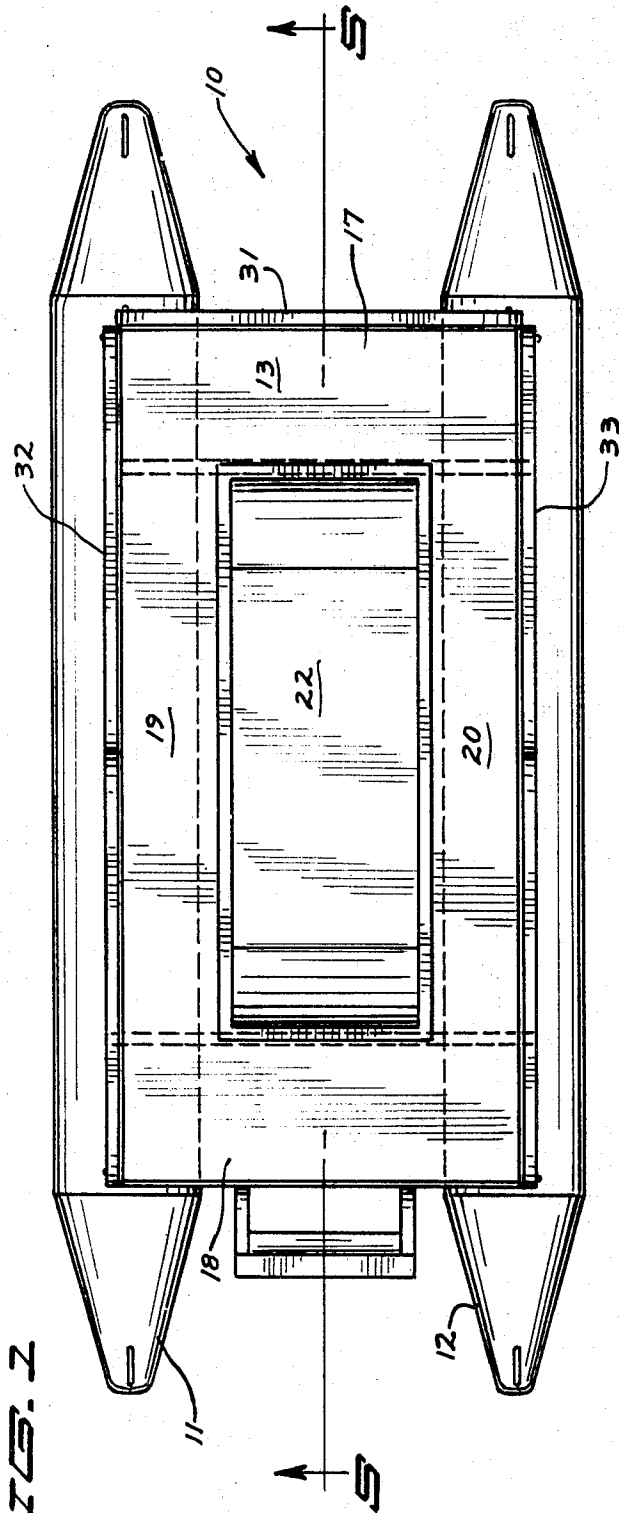
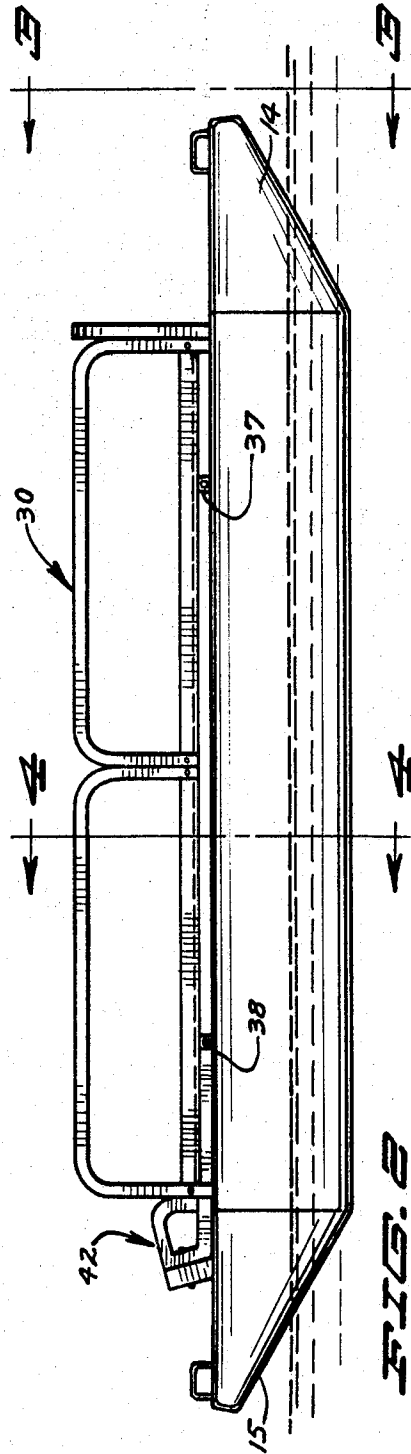
ABSTRACT: A pontoon boat comprising, in combination with a pair of elongated pontoon float members arranged in generally axially and horizontally parallel disposition, deck means mounted and secured in superimposed relationship to said pontoon float members, and a generally watertight open top cavity recessed from the surface of said deck and extending to a recessed depth which is substantially adjacent a plane coincidental with the floating axis of the pontoon float members.



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SHEET 1 OF 2



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FIG. 4

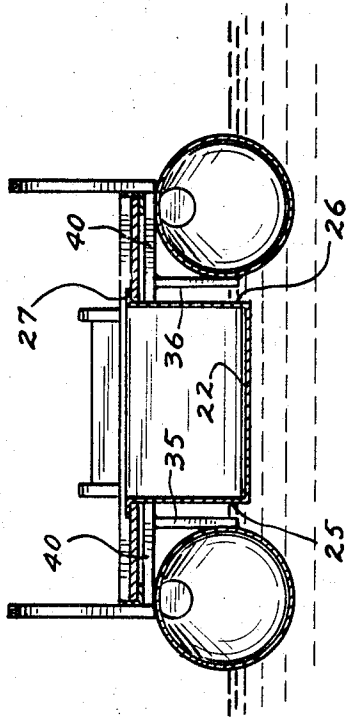


FIG. 3

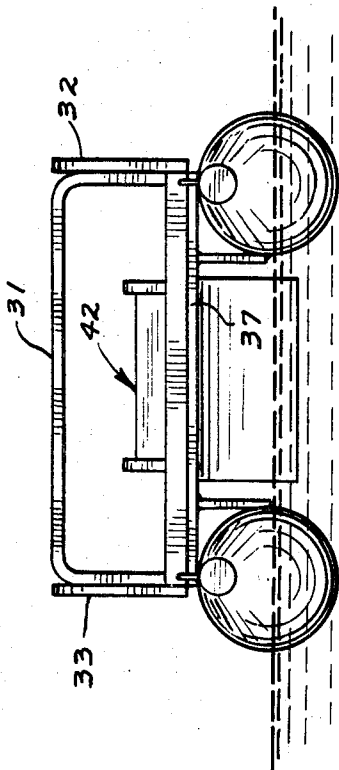
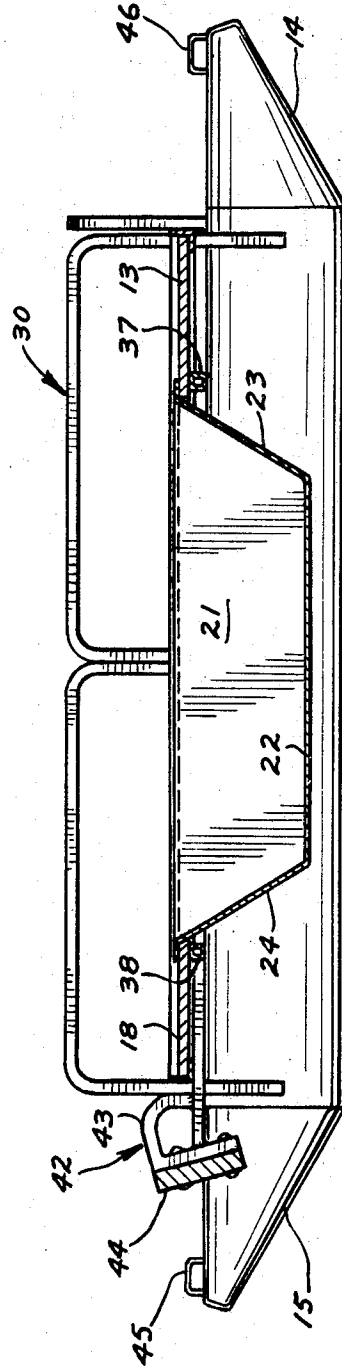


FIG. 5

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PONTOON BOAT

The present invention relates generally to a pontoon boat structure, and more particularly to a pontoon boat structure having a deck which is provided with a watertight open top cavity recessed from the surface of the deck and extending to a depth therebelow. The combination provides a pontoon boat having enhanced stability in the water, and accordingly a highly desirable vehicle for the shooting of water fowl.

Conventional pontoon boat structures utilize a pair of pontoons arranged in parallel disposition, the pontoons normally being tubular in their configuration. The devices are ordinarily unstable in the water, particularly when the occupants move primarily to one lateral edge thereof. The weight of the occupants is accordingly concentrated on one of the float members, and its surface area decreases as the depth of submersion increases, this occurring simultaneously with a raising of the pontoon located along the opposite lateral side. This instability is undesirable in pontoon craft of this type, and is particularly undesirable when the user tempts to utilize the structure for a platform from which to shoot water fowl.

In accordance with the present invention, the stability of a pontoon boat is enhanced by the provision of a recessed open top watertight cavity disposed between laterally arranged pontoon members. The cavity is recessed to a base depth which lies adjacent and slightly below a plane coincidental with the floating axis of the pontoon float members. Thus, as the occupant or occupants of the pontoon boat move to one lateral side or the other, the submersion of one pontoon occurs coincidentally with the increased submersion of the watertight recessed cavity. This increased submersion of the water tight recessed cavity increases the water displacement, and thus provides a supplemental or auxiliary float surface. Preferably, the deck means is provided in the form of an annular zone confined within the axial and transverse dimensions of the pontoon float members, and circumscribing the recessed cavity. Thus, the occupants may utilize the deck area as a seating platform, and their legs may extend downwardly into the recessed cavity zone. This provides a lower silhouette for the hunter utilizing the craft as a platform from which to shoot water fowl.

It is therefore a primary object of the present invention to provide a pontoon boat having enhanced stability, and having a structure which increases the water displacement upon submersion of the pontoon float members into the water.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an improved pontoon boat structure having a pair of generally parallel disposed pontoons with a deck means mounted in superimposed relationship upon the top of said pontoon float members, and a generally watertight cavity recessed from the surface of said deck means and extending to a depth below the upper surface of the pontoon float members.

It is yet a further object of the present invention to provide an improved pontoon boat structure having a pair of spaced-apart pontoon float members arranged in generally axially and horizontally parallel disposition, a deck means mounted in superimposed relationship upon the pontoon float members, and a watertight cavity recessed from the surface of the deck means, the fore-and-aft surfaces of the watertight cavity being arranged in downwardly converging relationship, one to another.

Other and further objects of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon a study of the following specification, appended claims, and accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of a pontoon boat prepared in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view of the pontoon boat shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a front elevational view of the structure taken generally along the line and in the direction of the arrows 3-3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a vertical sectional view taken along the line and in the direction of the arrows 4-4 of FIG. 2; and

FIG. 5 is a vertical sectional view taken along the line and in the direction of the arrows 5-5 of FIG. 1.

In accordance with the preferred modification of the present invention, the pontoon boat structure generally designated 10 comprises a pair of pontoon float members 11 and 12 together with a deck 13 secured on the upper surface thereof. The pontoons are, as indicated, generally elongated cylindrical elements having their fore-and-aft lower surfaces inclined toward the ends thereof, such as is illustrated at 14 and 15. The deck 13 includes a forwardly disposed segment 17, an aft segment 18, together with lateral segments 19 and 20. The deck 13, comprising the individual segments 17-20 inclusive, circumscribes the generally watertight cavity illustrated generally at 21. The cavity includes a lower or base surface 22 along with forward and aft bulkheads 23 and 24, and lateral bulkheads 25 and 26. Flanges such as are illustrated at 27 may be employed to secure or suspend the cavity 21 from the surface of the deck 13.

In order to assist the users, rails, if desired, may be employed such as are illustrated generally at 30, the rail including forward and lateral segments 31, 32 and 33.

In order to properly secure the deck 13 to the pontoon float members 11 and 12, support posts 35 and 36 are provided, these posts being, in turn, secured to the transverse stringers 37 and 38. If desired, lateral support stringers may be provided along the outer edge surfaces of the deck, as required. Also, if desired, the rail structure 30 may be utilized as a basic support member as is illustrated at 40 in FIG. 4. It will be appreciated that various techniques may be employed for securing the deck structure to the pontoons, the specific nature of this structure being dictated by the convenience of the designer.

A support rack 42 is provided for securing an outboard motor to the structure, the rack including a pair of spaced apart brackets 43 secured to a motor mounting plate 44. The boat structure is also provided with a plurality of gripping handles, such as are shown at 45 and 46, for the purpose of permitting ease of carrying.

The pontoon float members 11 and 12 may be fabricated from any desirable material, such as, for example, galvanized iron or aluminum. Plastic structures could also be employed, if desired. The deck structure 13 may also be fabricated from any desirable material, wood being, of course, preferred.

As is indicated in the drawings, the individual pontoon float members 11 and 12 are arranged in generally axially and horizontally parallel disposition. Such an arrangement is, of course, conventional in pontoon boat structures of this type. The deck is utilized to secure the pontoon float members in their axially and horizontally parallel disposition, the deck also being utilized to mount and retain the generally watertight recessed cavity disposed therein. While the bottom or base surface of the cavity may be recessed to a depth which is below the upper surface of the pontoon float members, this base surface preferably lies substantially adjacent or slightly below a plane coincidental with the floating axis of the pontoon float members. While this depth is not critical, it has been found to be less cumbersome, awkward, and more in keeping with the general purposes of the structure if the depth is just slightly below a plane through the floating axis of the pontoon float members.

Also, as indicated, the fore-and-aft surfaces of the cavity are arranged in downwardly converging relationship, one to another. This assists in reducing the resistance to motion of the structure, without significantly detracting from the increased displacement as the cavity is pushed or forced downwardly into the water. Further, the increase in submerged depth increases the amount of displacement, and hence the buoyant affect is increased. This arrangement has also been found to enhance the stability of the structure, particularly when a substantial portion of the load is disposed over or adjacent one of the laterally arranged pontoons.

It will be appreciated, therefore, that the structure disclosed herein is one which may be fabricated in accordance with a

variety of materials and techniques. The resulting structure is one of enhanced stability in use and operation.

I claim:

1. In combination with a pair of elongated pontoon float members arranged in generally axially and horizontally parallel disposition:

- a. deck means mounted in superimposed relationship upon said pontoon float members and securing said pontoon float members in said disposition;
- b. a generally watertight cavity recessed from the surface of said deck means having fore-and-aft bulkheads spaced apart by a base surface, the cavity extending to a predetermined recessed depth with the arrangement being such that said base surface lies above a plane coincidental with the bottom of said float members and substantially adjacent a plane coincidental with the normal floating axes of said pontoon float members when the craft is unloaded, and along a water displacing plane when the craft is loaded; and
- c. said fore bulkhead being angularly disposed in downwardly converging relationship to said aft bulkhead.

2. In combination with a pair of elongated pontoon float members arranged in generally axially and horizontally parallel disposition:

- a. deck means mounted in superimposed relationship upon said pontoon float members and securing said pontoon float members in said disposition; b. a generally watertight cavity recessed from the surface of said deck means and extending to a recessed depth which lies substantially adjacent a plane coincidental with the floating axes of said pontoon float members; and
- c. the fore and aft bulkheads of said watertight recessed cavity are arranged in downwardly converging relationship, one to another.

3. The combination as defined in claim 2 being particularly characterized in that said deck means is an annular zone confined within the axial and transverse dimensions of said pontoon float members, and circumscribing said recessed zone.

4. The combination as defined in claim 1 being particularly characterized in that said deck means is provided with an outer railing structure.

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