

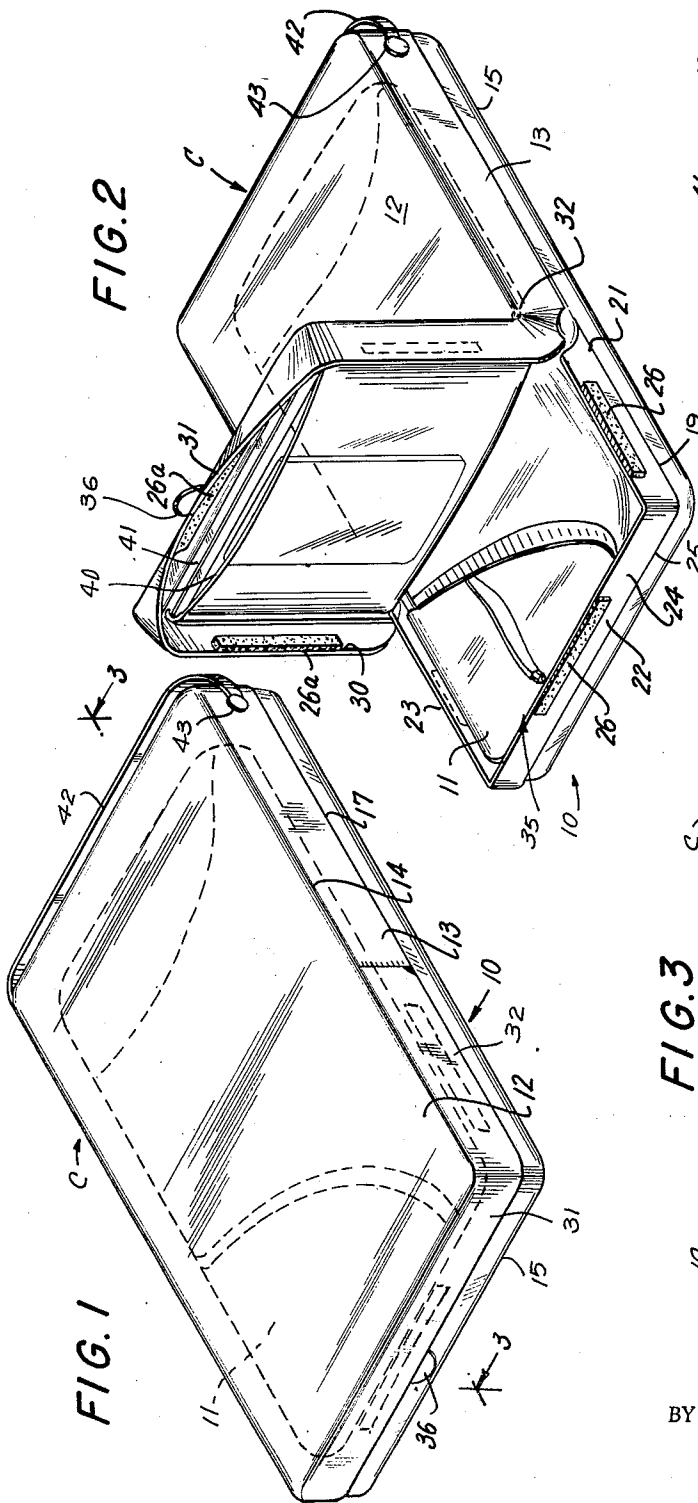
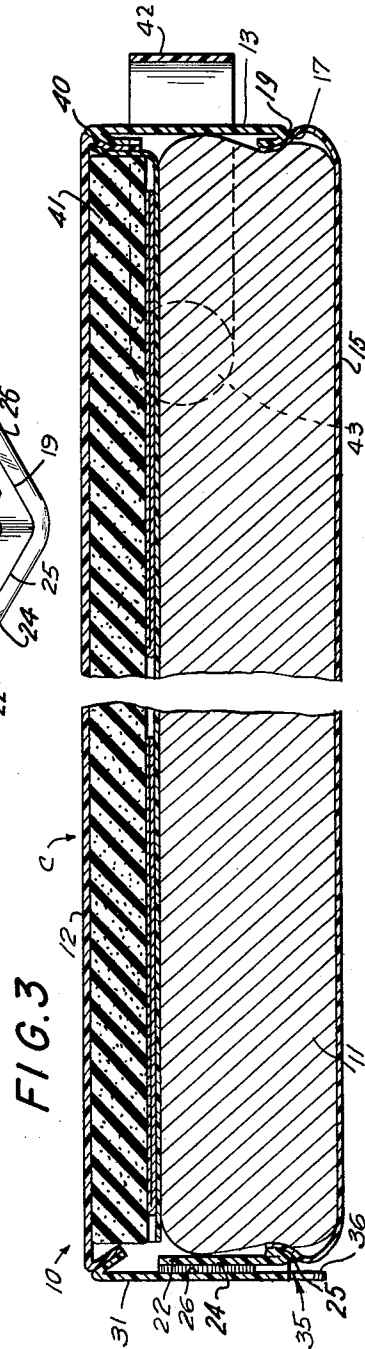
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LIFE PRESERVER CUSHION

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1

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LIFE PRESERVER CUSHION

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This invention relates to a water safety device, and more particularly to a cushion device for stowing a distinctively colored life vest or other life preserver garment.

Still more particularly, this invention relates to a cushion which comprises a spray-proof casing which may be charged with a life vest or other life preserving garment and which, when thus charged, provides an attractive and comfortable cushion, the device being characterized by the fact that the life preserver is at all times visible, to facilitate location thereof in case of need.

In the past, buoying cushions have been provided which function, when not in use, as seats, and which cushions provide, in case of emergency, floatable water safety accessories. While such devices have proven adequate when used as cushions, they are not efficient life preserving garments. In fact, present regulations require the presence aboard ship of a predetermined number of life preserver garments, such as life preserving vests, which vests are required to be of a construction approved by the responsible governmental authority (the United States Coast Guard).

It is further required that the garments or vests be stowed in such manner as to be immediately useful and available in the event of an emergency.

Life vests and other approved life preserver garments generally comprise a buoyant filling contained within an outer fabric casing. However, notwithstanding various processes for treating the fabric of such casing, the same is subject to rot, mildew and like deteriorating influences. In view of the requirement for stowing the life preserver garments in a manner to render the same visible and available in case of emergency, they have heretofore normally be secured, when under way, in the open where the preservers are exposed to spray, rain and the like. These influences hasten the rotting and mildewing aforesaid, unless considerable care is taken to dry the preservers after each exposure to moisture.

Accordingly, it is an object of this invention to provide a decorative casing, forming a decorative cushion when used in combination with life preservers of approved type, which cushion maintains the preserver in a moisture-free condition, yet readily accessible for use in an emergency and being at all times visible.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a decorative casing for enclosing and forming a cushion of an approved life vest or like garment, which casing includes a substantially opaque upper and side covering portion for providing a decorative assembly yet, by reason of the novel construction of the device, maintains at least a portion of the life preserver garment in clear view for ready accessibility.

Still a further object of this invention is to provide a novel casing for life preservers or the like which, in addition to forming a decorative cushion when stuffed with the life preserver garment, and maintaining the garment

2

in a moistureproof condition, provides a waterproof interior pocket portion, permitting the retention therein of a chart or the like, and which portion may similarly be used for maintaining valuables of the user in dry condition, should it be necessary to enter the water.

To attain these objects and such further objects as may appear herein or be hereinafter pointed out, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, forming a part hereof, in which

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of the device when assembled with a life preserver garment to form a cushion;

FIGURE 2 is a perspective view of the device when the same has been opened for access to the interior;

FIGURE 3 is a magnified section taken on the line 3--3 of FIGURE 1.

In accordance with the invention, 10 represents a cushion containing a life preserver device 11 which may comprise any approved life vest or other form of life preserver garment. Such garment 11, in accordance with present requirements, must be colored a characteristics hue, normally bright orange, for rendering the wearer visible when in the water, and also permitting ready location of the garment.

The cushion 10 includes an outer casing C comprising an upper, preferably opaque panel 12, to the periphery of which panel a gusset 13 is secured as by a heat seal 14 or the like. The panel 12 and gusset 13 preferably are formed of a waterproof, pliable, heat sealable plastic material, such as a vinyl or the like. As best seen in FIGURE 1, the gusset 13 is secured about the periphery of the upper panel 12, preferably by a heat seal or like impervious connection.

A lower panel 15, comprising a clear, transparent or translucent plastic material such as transparent or translucent vinyl, is sealably connected at substantially its entire periphery 17 to the lower marginal edge 19 of the gusset 13. The width of the gusset 13 is considerably less than the thickness of the life preserver garment 11 to be stored in the casing C, for purposes which will hereafter become apparent.

The edge portions of the lower panel 15, along three sides thereof 21, 22 and 23, which sides are unconnected to the gusset 13, are provided with an upwardly extending band-like flap portion 24. The lower marginal edge 25 of the flap portion 24 is heat sealed or otherwise imperviously joined to the peripheral portion of the said portions 21, 22, 23 of the lower panel member 15.

The material forming the gusset 13 and flap portion 24 is optionally but preferably relatively stiff, whereby the same is self-supporting.

The flap 24, at some portion along the sides 21, 22, 23 thereof, is provided on its outer face with a plurality of fastener elements 26, which fastener elements may optionally but preferably constitute a looped or barbed nylon band, acting as one-half of a cooperative fastener assembly. A complementary looped or barbed nylon band 26a, which is of well known construction and is commercially available under the trademark Velcro, is secured to the inner faces of the gusset 13 at the sides 30, 31 and 32. It will be understood that while the embodiment of the drawings is illustrated in conjunction with the said Velcro fastener, other features, such as snaps, zippers or the like, may be employed to close what will be denominated as the mouth portion 35 of the casing

defined by the upwardly extending flap 24 and the downwardly extending portions of the gusset 13 which are unconnected to the lower panel 15. The fastener chosen is preferably openable upon the application of a lateral pulling force, as might be exerted by drawing against tab 36, FIGURE 1.

To the undersurface of the upper panel 12, there may be bonded, by heat sealing or the like, a waterproof vinyl sheet 40 which is optionally but preferably of a size substantially coextensive with the inner surface of the panel 12. Sheet 40 is heat sealed to said underside along three marginal edges thereof, to define with the upper panel a pocket which may be charged with a foam pad or sheet 41 of polyurethane foam or the like.

It will be recognized that the foam and pocket construction above described will form a convenient depository for a chart or map, which will be maintained in waterproof condition in the event that the casing C is immersed in water. Additionally, the foam layer 41 operates, when the casing is charged with a life vest or preserver 11, to assure the comfort of one sitting on the cushion by insulating the posterior of said person from contact with hard portions, elements or hardware used to form a part of the life vest or preserver.

It will be readily recognized from the above that the casing C may be charged with the life preserver or garment 11 by stripping or opening the fasteners 26, 26a, and then inserting the said garment through the open mouth portion 35.

As hereinbefore pointed out, the life preserver is of a thickness greater than the width of the gusset 13 and the lower portion 15 is preferably somewhat larger in dimension than the upper panel 12. It will be thus observed, as shown in the drawings, that when the casing C is charged with a preserver, portions of the bottom panel 15 are distended or bulged, whereby the latter appear or extend beneath the lower marginal edge of the gusset 13. Thus, the cushion may be utilized by disposing the lower edge 15 against the deck or other horizontal surface of the ship or boat, and yet the distinctively colored life preserver garment 11 will be visible from all angles except, perhaps, from directly above the opaque cover 12.

Preferably the cover 12 is colored so as to be readily distinguishable from the color of the life preserver so that the portions of the latter exposed through the bottom panel 15 are in direct contrast, making the same more conspicuous.

Optionally but preferably, the upper opaque panel portion 12 is formed of stiffer vinyl material than the lower panel 15. This construction results in inducing primary bulging in the softer, more limp under panel 15 when the cushion is charged with the preserver, thereby increasing the exposure of the preserver through the casing.

If desired, a bail or other form of handle 42 may be heat sealed across an end 43 of the casing, enabling the same to be hung against a bulkhead of a boat. It will be observed that in such hanging condition, the under panel 15 in bulged condition will similarly expose portions of the container preserver. The bail 42 will also facilitate transporting of the charged casing.

It will be observed that when the panel 15 is facing downwardly, the upper flap portions 30, 31, 32 outwardly lap the flap portion 24 of the gusset portion 13 adjacent the mouth portion 35. Thus, when the transparent under panel 15 is disposed against a horizontal surface for use of the device as a cushion and when the thus disposed cushion is exposed to spray or the like, it will be recognized that the spray will drain freely away from the cushion and not enter the latter, thus maintaining the life preserver in a dry condition.

Insofar as the term "transparent" is used in describing or defining the under layer, it is understood that such term is to include transparent, translucent or clear plastics, it being the intention that the color of the preserver

be visible from said panel 15. The visibility of the garment from all angles is improved where the transparent layer is of a type in which light rays tend to bend and follow the configuration of the layer.

Having thus described the invention and illustrated its use, what is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent is:

1. A decorative cushion device for storing in dry, visible and accessible condition, a distinctively colored life preserver garment comprising an upper decorative, deformable plastic panel member of opaque material, a symmetrical transparent lower panel member, a gusset member including upper and lower edge portions connected, respectively, to the peripheries of said upper and lower panel members, sealable mouth means in said cushion, and a life preserver garment forming a stuffing for said cushion insertable through said mouth means, said garment being of a thickness in excess of the thickness of said gusset whereby, when said lower panel is rested on a planar surface and said garment is disposed between said panel members, said garment will cause portions of said lower panel to be projected beyond the plane defined by said lower edge portions of said gusset.

2. A device in accordance with claim 1 wherein said sealable mouth means includes overlapping and overlapped flap portions, said overlapping flap portion being fixed with respect to said upper panel and having a free edge extending toward said lower panel and said overlapped flap portion being fixed to said lower panel and having a free overlapped edge extending toward said upper panel, the outer face of said lower flap portion being in engagement with the inner face of said upper flap portion, said engaging faces including complementary releasable fastener means arranged to maintain said faces in engagement.

3. A water safety cushion device comprising, an upper, decorative waterproof plastic panel and a symmetrical lower panel of transparent waterproof plastic, a longitudinally extended gusset band disposed between said panels and having its upper, marginal edge sealingly fixed to the periphery of said upper panel and its lower marginal edge sealingly fixed to a major portion but not all of the periphery of said lower panel to define between said unconnected portion of said gusset and said lower panel an open mouth portion, fastener means on the inner face of said gusset adjacent said open mouth portion, an extended lower flap portion having a lower edge sealingly fixed to the peripheral portions of said lower panel not connected to said gusset, said flap portion being outwardly lapped by said gusset and including on its outer face, fastener elements complementally located to be connectible with the fastener means of said gusset to maintain said flaps in close adjacency, and a life preserver garment insertable into said cushion device through said mouth portion, of a thickness exceeding the width of said gusset portion whereby, in the inserted position of said garment in said cushion, portions of said lower panel will be thereby displaced outwardly to lie in a plane beyond the plane defined by the lower edge of said gusset.

4. A water safety device comprising, a rectangular, decorative, opaque, waterproof upper panel and a transparent waterproof, rectangular lower panel, gusset means having upper and lower edge portions sealingly connected to said upper and lower panels, respectively, including elements defining a sealable open mouth portion, a waterproof, generally rectangular sheet sealed along three sides to the inner face of said upper panel, to form a pocket having an open entrance portion, a removable, spongy sheet of area corresponding generally to the area of said upper panel disposed within said pocket to provide, within said device, a secondary waterproof storage area immediately adjacent said upper panel, said device, when filled with a life preserver garment of thickness exceeding the width of said gusset, providing a structure wherein said lower panel will be thereby displaced outwardly to

lie in a plane beyond the plane defined by the lower edge of said gusset.

5. A device in accordance with claim 1 wherein said upper panel member is stiffer and less pliant than said lower panel.

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