Feb. 22, 1927. 1,618,347

J. McSHERRY

LIFE PRESERVER

Filed Nov. 30, 1925

Fig. 1.

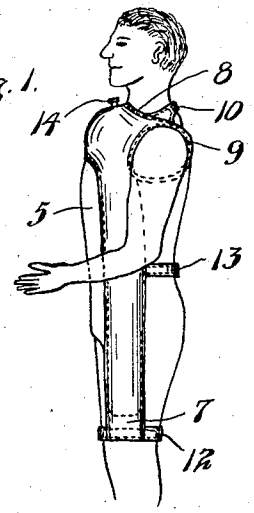


Fig. 4.

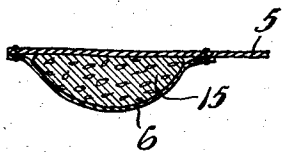


Fig. 3.

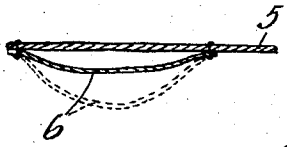
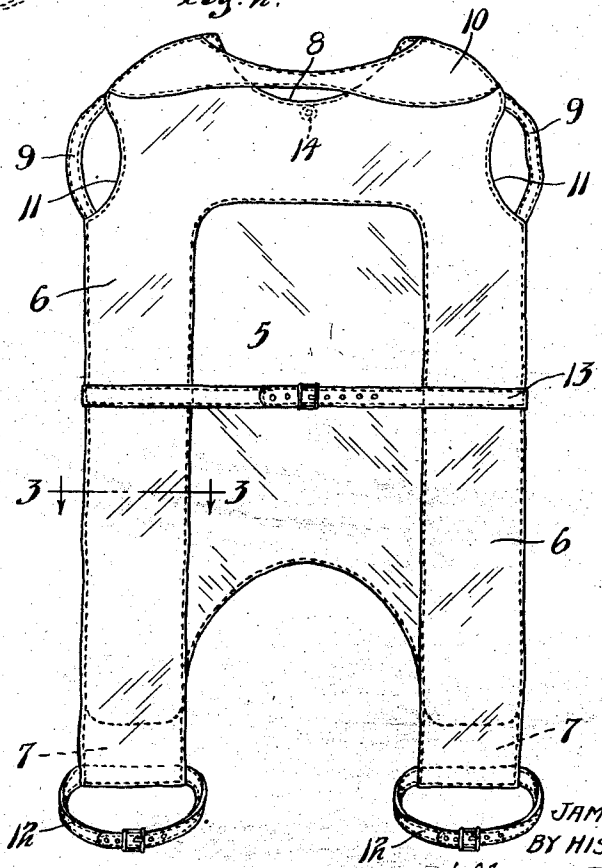


Fig. 2.



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Patented Feb. 22, 1927. 1,618,347

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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LIFE PRESERVER.

Application filed November 30, 1925. Serial No. 72,155.

This invention relates to a life preserver and particularly to such a device which can be used by the wearer while learning to swim or which can be used by the wearer while on shipboard.

It is an object of this invention to provide a life preserver which may be readily and quickly attached or detached to or from the body of the wearer for use while in bathing or on shipboard.

It is a further object of the invention to provide a life preserver having a compartment extending over the chest of the wearer and compartments extending over each side and each leg of the wearer.

It is another object of the invention to provide such a life preserver which may be positively secured about the arms and legs of the wearer for use without danger of slipping from the body of the wearer.

It is an additional object of the invention to provide an inflatable life preserver which can be reinflated by the wearer while the wearer is using the same in the water.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention will be fully set forth in the following description made in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters refer to the same parts throughout the different views, and in which—

Fig. 1 is a view in side elevation of the device applied to the body of the wearer;

Fig. 2 is a view in rear elevation of the device detached;

Fig. 3 is a sectional view of the device taken on the line 3—3 of Fig. 2, the compartment therein being shown in non-inflated position in full lines and in inflated position in dotted lines; and

Fig. 4 is a view similar to Fig. 3 showing a solid filler within the compartment.

Referring to the drawings, the device comprises, in general, two main sections, an outer section 5 and an inner section 6. These two sections are composed of blanks cut from flexible waterproof material, such as rubberized cloth. The outer section 5 is cut substantially rectangular in shape and has depending tabs 7 at either side thereof below the main body portion thereof adapted to extend along the legs of the wearer. A substantially semi-circular portion is cut from the top of the outer section 5 to form a recessed portion at 8 adapted to fit around the front of the neck of the wearer. Adjacent the top side edges of the outer section 5, portions are cut out to form armholes 9. Inner section 6 is of substantially inverted U-shape and has a circular portion with a central opening therein at the top forming a collar 10 adapted to fit about the neck of the wearer. Inner section 5 also has semi-circular recesses 11 at either edge thereof and adjacent the top thereof corresponding to the inner half of the armholes 9 cut in the outer section 5. The outer section 5 and the inner section 6 are stitched, or otherwise secured together, along the inner and outer edges of the inner section 6 to form a waterproof and airtight compartment between the two sections. The two sections are also stitched, or otherwise secured, at points extending a short distance upward from the lower ends thereof. A strap 12, one portion having the usual buckle thereon, the other portion having the usual punch-holes therein, is secured to each of the tabs 7. A belt 13, one portion having the usual buckle thereon, the other portion having the usual holes therein, has ends secured to opposite sides of the central outer edges of the outer section 5. An air inlet 14 is attached to the outer side of the outer section 5 adjacent the recessed portion 8, extending into the compartment formed between the two sections, said air inlet having the usual air valve (not shown) and cap of well-known construction.

In Fig. 4 a cork or other buoyant solid filler 15 is inserted in the compartment formed between the outer section 5 and the inner section 6. When such solid filler is used, the air inlet valve 14 need not be used and sections 5 and 6 need not be formed of waterproof material. The care which must be exercised in stitching or otherwise securing the two sections together in the inflatable form of the device to form a waterproof and air-tight compartment, need not be exercised when the solid filler is used.

In using the device the head of the wearer is first inserted through the opening in collar 10, the arms of the wearer are inserted through the armholes 9 and the device is then pulled down over the body of the wearer. The straps 12 are then buckled around the legs of the wearer and the belt 13 is buckled around the waist of the wearer. When the solid filler is used, the life preserver is then ready for use. In the in-

flatable form of the device the air compartment formed between the two sections must be inflated. This can be done either by the mouth or by any type of air pump, either before or after the life preserver is placed about the body of the wearer. As the air inlet 14 is adapted to lie adjacent the neck of the wearer, it can be seen that after the life preserver has been secured about the wearer, or even while the device is being used in the water, the wearer can easily apply his mouth to the air inlet to blow the compartment up to full inflated condition. After the compartment has been inflated, the valve and cap in the air inlet 14 will retain the air in the compartment, and the compartment being of waterproof material and air-tight, any escape of air will be prevented. The inflated life preserver can now be used in the water.

It can be seen that a very effective life preserver is obtained. By placing a compartment across the chest of the wearer, the wearer's head will be prevented from being submerged in the water, while, by forming a compartment along each side and leg of the wearer, the proper buoyancy will be given to the lower extremities of the body so that the wearer cannot possibly sink in the water. It can also be seen that, when the wearer lies flat on his stomach on the surface of the water in swimming position or flat on his back, the legs of the wearer will be supported to hold the same on top of the water in easy position for a beginner to learn how to swim. The device will also readily support the wearer in sitting position in the water with the wearer's head out of water.

On shipboard the device can either be worn at all times or can be kept accessible in case of emergency. The device can be quickly placed about the body of a wearer and quickly inflated for emergency use. After the device has been used for some time in the water, if it is found that any air has escaped from the compartment, the wearer can readily refill the same while still remaining in the water.

After use the device can be quickly removed from the wearer's body by unbuckling belt 13 and straps 12 and slipping the device over the head and from the arms of the wearer. The compartments can then be deflated and the device folded in small compass for storage.

In addition to the use of the device as a life preserver, it will be found that the device will also provide a very convenient container for carrying liquids or gases, or, by a few slight modifications, the device could be used for carrying a large number of small solid articles.

The parts of the device are few and of very simple construction, and the same can be inexpensively and easily made. The device has been amply demonstrated and has been found to be very efficient and serviceable for the purposes set forth.

It will, of course, be understood that various changes may be made in the form, details, proportions and arrangement of parts without departing from the scope of applicant's invention, which generally consists in the structure defined, set forth and described in the following claim.

What is claimed is:

A life preserver of flexible material having an outer section adapted to extend from the neck to the legs of the front portion of the body of the wearer, said section having apertures therein through which the head and shoulders of the wearer are adapted to be inserted, a belt adapted to encircle the waist of the wearer, a strap adapted to encircle each leg of the wearer, said belt and straps being connected to said section, and an inner section cooperating with said outer section to form an inverted U-shaped inflatable water tight compartment having an upper portion adapted to extend across the chest of the wearer and side portions adapted to extend downwardly from said upper portion over the sides and legs of the wearer.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.

JAMES McSHERRY.