

May 24, 1938.

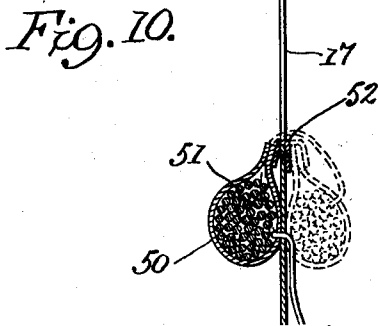
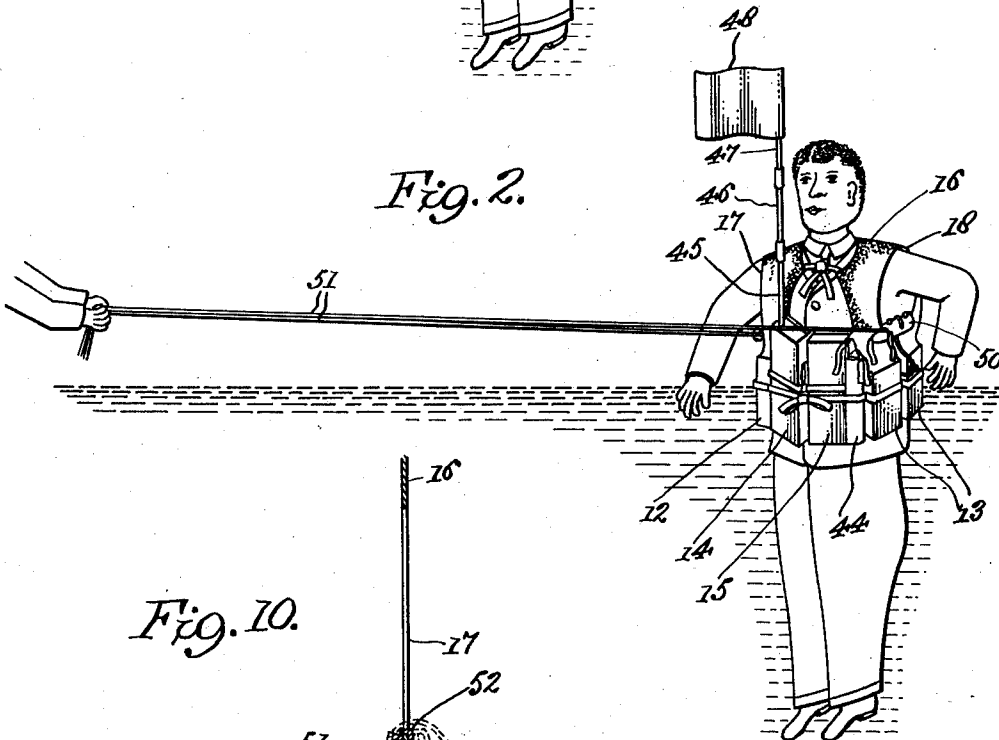
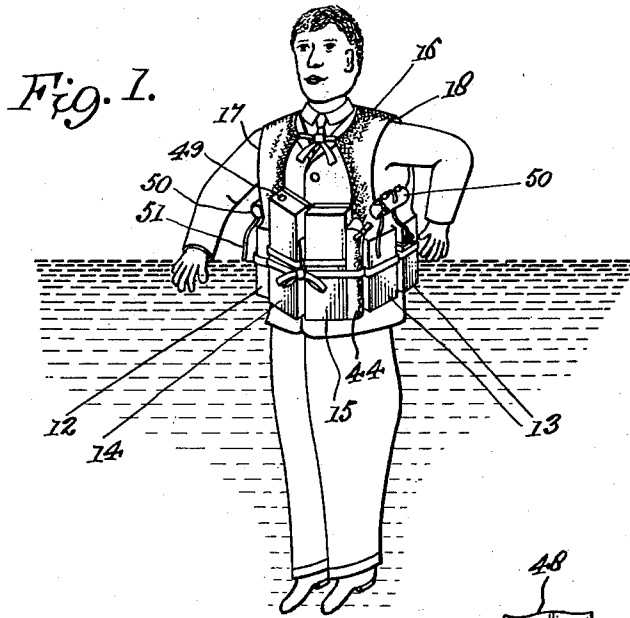
O. W. JOHNSON

2,118,708

LIFE PRESERVER

Filed Dec. 23, 1935

3 Sheets-Sheet 1



Inventor
O. W. Johnson
By
Wilkinson & Mawhinney
Attorneys

May 24, 1938.

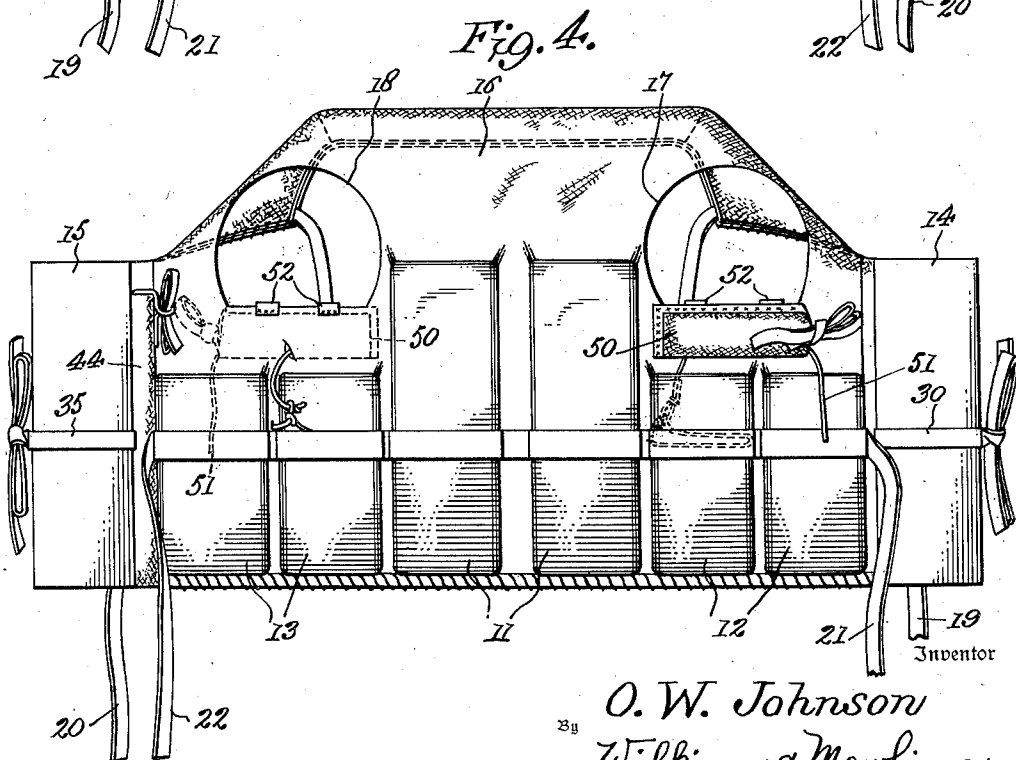
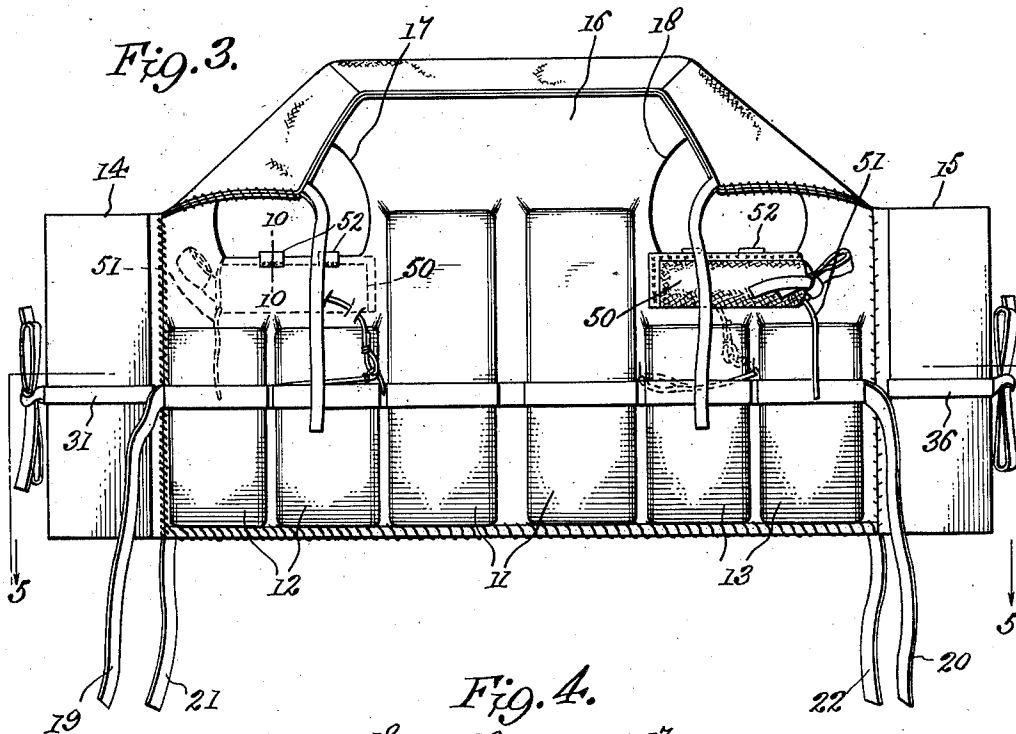
O. W. JOHNSON

2,118,708

LIFE PRESERVER

Filed Dec. 23, 1935

3 Sheets-Sheet 2



Inventor

O. W. Johnson

Wilkinson & Mawhinney
Attorneys

Attorneys.

May 24, 1938.

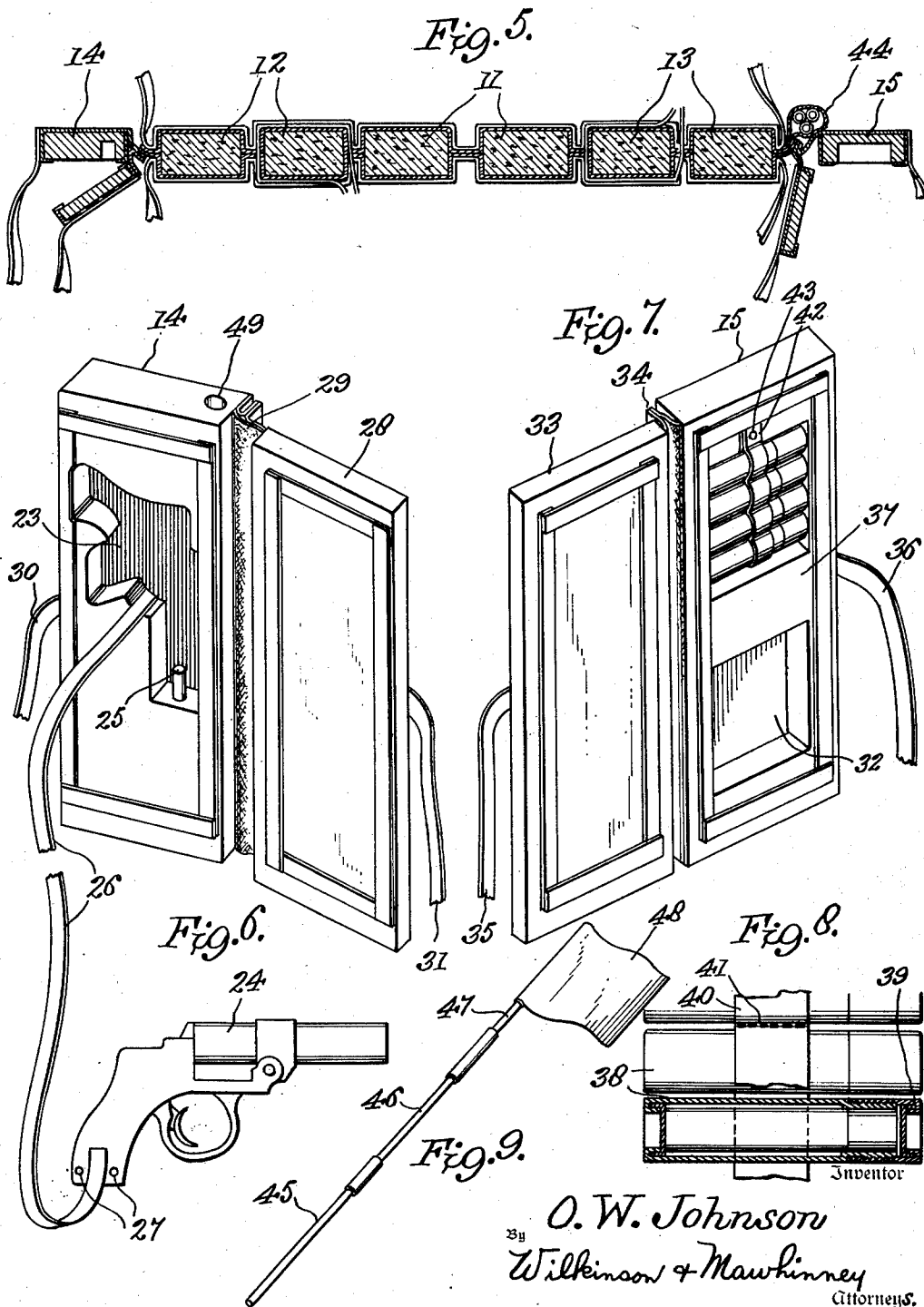
O. W. JOHNSON

2,118,708

LIFE PRESERVER

Filed Dec. 23, 1935

3 Sheets-Sheet 3



UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,118,708

LIFE PRESERVER

Otho W. Johnson, Baltimore, Md.

Application December 23, 1935, Serial No. 55,915

3 Claims. (Cl. 9-17)

The present invention relates to improvements in life preservers and has for an object to so modify the construction of a standard life preserver as to admit of embodying therein a number of novel and useful features which will promote the safety and the comfort of the wearer.

It is another object of the invention to incorporate these various features into the construction of a standard life preserver so as not to interfere with its reversibility, nor the method or manner of putting it on or taking it off.

An important feature of the invention is the provision of rope containers or casings flexibly secured to the life preserver adjacent the arm holes in such manner that these rope holders may be swung through the arm holes from one to the other side of the life preserver or jacket, such ropes being useful in casting from one person afloat to another to the end that two or a group of more persons may be drawn and bound together by the rope for mutual safety and co-operation in the emergency.

Other objects of the invention are to provide a signal pistol and signal cartridges carried within containers in the life preserver for giving a visible signal at night of the existence of shipwrecked persons afloat in the vicinity, and to maintain the pistol and the cartridges in a dry water proof condition.

A further object of the invention is to provide a flag and flag-staff kit incorporated in the life preserver for the purpose of raising a visual signal at an appreciable elevation above the surface of the water so as to attract attention from long distances.

A still further object of the invention relates to the provision of food containers of water proof character whereby shipwrecked persons may be sustained until rescued.

With the foregoing and other objects in view, the invention will be more fully described hereinafter, and will be more particularly pointed out in the claims appended hereto.

In the drawings, wherein like symbols refer to like or corresponding parts throughout the several views.

Figure 1 is a perspective view of an improved life preserver constructed according to the present invention and illustrated in a position of use upon a person in the water.

Figure 2 is a similar view but showing additionally the flag hoisted and the life line thrown out and in the hands of a companion afloat.

Figure 3 is an inside plan view of the improved life preserver.

Figure 4 is an outside plan view of the same.

Figure 5 is a longitudinal section taken on the line 5-5 in Figure 3.

Figure 6 is a perspective view of the pistol container with the door open and the pistol drawn out therefrom.

Figure 7 is a perspective view of the other container for containing the cartridges, food, etc. and with the door open and the interior exposed.

Figure 8 is a fragmentary vertical section of the cartridge unit with one of the containers shown in section.

Figure 9 is a perspective view of the flag and the flag-staff in assembled condition, and

Figure 10 is a vertical section taken on the line 10-10 in Figure 3.

Referring more particularly to the drawings a standard form of life preserver is shown composed generally of the back sections 11 as shown more particularly in Figures 3 and 4, the shorter or lower side sections 12 and 13 and the front sections 14 and 15.

All of these sections are ordinarily made of cork or similar buoyant material and are connected together by canvas or other flexible jacket 16, the jacket being stitched together between the various sections for the purpose of maintaining the buoyant material in place and separated one from another section whereby the jacket may flex between such sections to the end that it may be made to surround the body of the wearer in a close fit with the arms of such wearer projecting out through the arm holes 17 and 18. The arm holes are at the sides of the jacket whereby the side buoyant sections 12 and 13 are of shorter height.

The life preserver or jacket is secured about the body of the wearer by tying the straps or tapes affixed thereto. Inside tapes are shown at 19 and 20, the same being connected with the inside portion of the jacket inwardly of the front sections 14 and 15.

Outside tapes or straps 21 and 22 are shown as secured to the outside of the jacket and adapted to be brought together on the outsides of the sections 14 and 15 and tied together as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

The tapes or straps, as shown in Figure 5, are attached at opposite sides of the jacket just inwardly of the end sections. Although Figures 3 and 4 are referred to as inside and outside views, it will be understood that these are relative terms to indicate that these figures are taken from relatively opposite sides of the life preserver but that

the life preserver is reversible and may be put on from one side or the other.

The front sections 14 and 15, made of cork or balsa wood, are arranged to open and close like a book. These two sections are shown in Figures 6 and 7, and in each of the sections are formed receptacles. In one of the sections, for instance, in section 14, there is formed a receptacle 23 made in the outline of the pistol 24 whereby the pistol will snugly fit into the receptacle with its barrel fitting over the centering pin 25 and with its butt and trigger-guard fitting into complementary recesses in the receptacle. This pistol 24 is a signal pistol for firing signal lights at night. The pistol is preferably made of aluminium because of its light weight and small cost, the weight of such a pistol being negligible. The pistol 24 is secured to the cork or wood at some convenient point by a strap 26 made of light canvas whereby to prevent the pistol from being lost by dropping it from the hand while in the water. The pistol is provided with perforations 27 at each side of its butt for draining water therefrom.

The pistol receptacle is closed by a door or lid 28 formed of cork or balsa wood and being secured to the receptacle by a flexible canvas or to the hinge 29 which will in effect be a part of the jacket. The receptacle cover 28 is normally kept closed by the tapes 30 and 31.

The other front section 15 is also hollowed out internally to provide a receptacle 32 having a lid or cover 33 flexibly secured thereto as indicated at 34 and being held in closed position by the straps or tapes 35 and 36. In this receptacle 32 there are two compartments, an upper and lower compartment separated by a block partition 37. In one of these compartments there is provided a number of light signals or cartridges and in the other containers for food. The food may be in the form of bars of chocolate, which has high nutritive and sustaining value, or compressed food of some nature. The cartridges are likewise held in containers in order to make the same water proof. A convenient size for these containers is found to be three or four inches in length and one-half inch in diameter. Such containers are preferably of aluminium and are of tubular form as indicated at 38 in Figure 8. Such containers have preferably the screw threaded tops or caps 39 for the purpose of making the same water tight when screwed on, but for further assurance I also seal them with paraffin making them both air and water tight. Such containers 38 are carried as units for instance four all bound in a tape 40 which is folded about the same and stitched as indicated at 41 between each container, whereby the tape provides separate pockets between the stitches for each container. The ends of the tape are indicated at 42 in Figure 7 and they extend against a portion of the cork or wood to which they are fixed as by a wooden peg 43. The lights used in the cartridges are similar to the ones used in Roman candles, but the charge of powder is sufficiently strong to send the light up about two hundred feet which is sufficient distance to be seen at night. All of the above parts are self-buoyant.

Adjacent one of the front sections, for instance the section 15, is a canvas or other flexible bag or pocket 44 for the purpose of holding the flag and flag-staff or pole. Ordinarily the flag-staff, which may be composed of a number of sections, is disconnected and the sections fitted side by side in the pocket 44. The flag is shown in Fig-

ure 9 and consists of three pole sections 45, 46, and 47, although it may be made up of any desired number. The ends of the pole sections are inserted in one another and when assembled the flag will stand approximately forty inches in height. The flag 48 itself will be of some color, preferably red, and of light material. A preferred size is 12 x 24 inches. The flag is to be used while in the water both day and night, and the purpose of this flag is to assist in the rescue. It may be seen at night as well as day when search lights are used by the rescue party. The flag is also self-buoyant. The bag or container 44 for the flag and its sections is located along side one of the front sections 15 in the space between this section and the adjacent side sections 13 so that it will not interfere with the flexibility of the jacket. The flag may be erected at any particular place on the life preserver. A socket 49 in which the flag is stepped is shown in the top of the front section 14.

One or more casings 50 are used for carrying the life line or life rope 51. These casings may be made of canvas like that used in the jacket. Such casings may be substantially cylindrical and closed on their sides at one end with the other end open to permit the life line 51 to be nested therein. The open end is closeable by tying the tape 51. Two of these casings 50 will be generally employed, one being placed under the left arm pit and the other under the right arm pit of the jacket. Each casing may be about eight inches long carrying about thirty feet of small rope. As shown in Figure 10 the casing 50 may be swung through the arm pit from one side of the jacket to the other in the act of reversing the same. For this purpose the casing 50 is secured along its upper edge only, as by the tape hinge 52 to the jacket in line with the lower portion of the arm hole 17. The inner end of the rope may be brought down as indicated in Figure 3 and wrapped one or more times about one of the cork sections 12 or 13, or both to anchor the same to the jacket. The purpose of this life line is that when two or more persons are in the water, they may use this rope to lash themselves together, thereby keeping them from drifting apart and making it easier for the rescue party to find them. When in the water all that is necessary to do is to pull out the rope and throw it to a near companion, as indicated in Figure 2, and for him to make it fast around himself. These parts are also self-buoyant.

Figure 1 shows the jacket as worn by the wearer supported thereby in the water. The jacket is engaged about the body in the same way as the standard life preserver.

Figure 2 shows the signal flag elevated and the life lines 51 cast out to a companion in the water who has grasped the same and is drawing the first party toward him for the purpose of lashing the two together. By opening the outer set of straps, whichever set of straps this happens to be, it will be the straps 19 and 20 for one position of the life preserver, and straps 21 and 22 for the reverse position by opening the outer straps while leaving the inner straps tied to the front sections 14 and 15 may be swung out and their covers opened to give access to the interiors of the receptacles whereby the cartridges and the pistol may be withdrawn and used for the purpose of giving visual signals, and whereby food may be obtained.

It is obvious that various changes and modifications may be made in the details of construction.

tion and design of the above specifically described embodiment of this invention without departing from the spirit thereof, such changes and modifications being restricted only by the scope of the following claims:

What is claimed is:

1. An improved life preserver comprising a reversible jacket having arm-holes, and a life-line containing casing secured flexibly at its upper edge only to the jacket on a line substantially even with the lower edge of the arm-hole to permit the casing to swing through the arm-hole from one to the other side of the jacket.

2. In a life preserver having a jacket having ends meeting in front of the wearer and buoyant sections secured to the jacket, a buoyant supply section secured to one end of said jacket, said supply section being split into opposite side portions and being provided with an article receiving cavity between said side portions, separate releasable fastening members attached to the inner and outer sides of the jacket at each of the ends, the fastening members attached to the side of the jacket next to the wearer serving to hold

the jacket itself in position while the fastening members at the opposite side of the jacket extend across the said buoyant supply section whereby to hold the same in position against the wearer until needed and then to permit access to said supply section without releasing the jacket fastening member.

3. A life preserver of the type having a series of buoyant blocks secured together to form a jacket with free ends adapted to be brought together in front of the wearer having the blocks adjacent the free ends of the jacket split into two sections and having an article holding cavity formed therebetween, means for releasably holding said sections together to close the cavity, and corresponding tie straps secured to the inner and outer faces of said jacket whereby the jacket can be tied in position on the wearer and the split blocks can also be tied in position against the wearer and so that access to the split blocks can be had by untying the outer straps without untying the inner straps.

OTHO W. JOHNSON.