Aug. 16, 1966 B. F. TRUNK 3,266,655

CONTAINER FOR LIFE JACKETS AND THE LIKE

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FIG. 1.

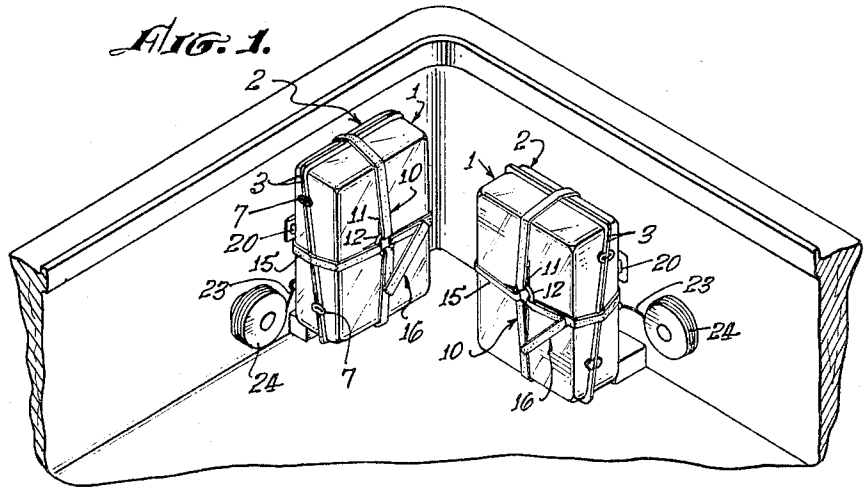

FIG. 2.

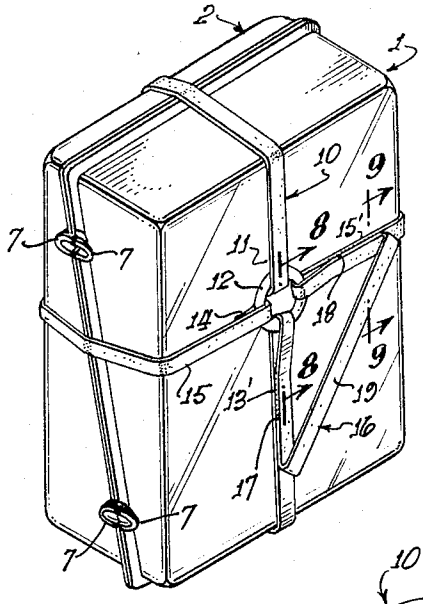

FIG. 8.

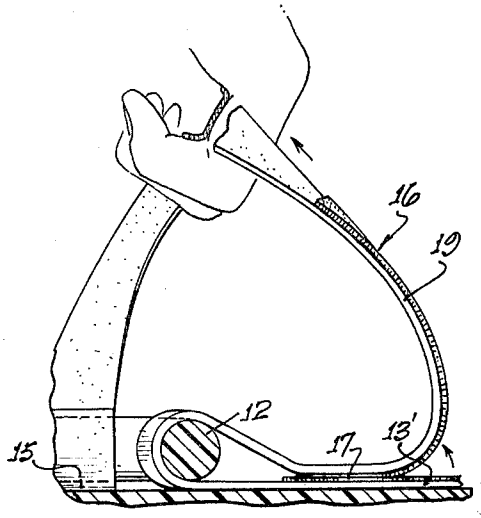

FIG. 9.

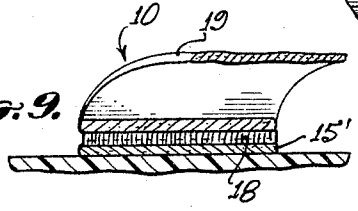

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FIG. 3.

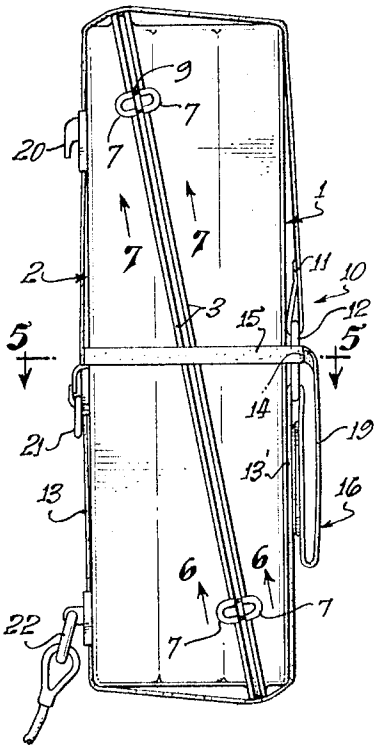


FIG. 4.

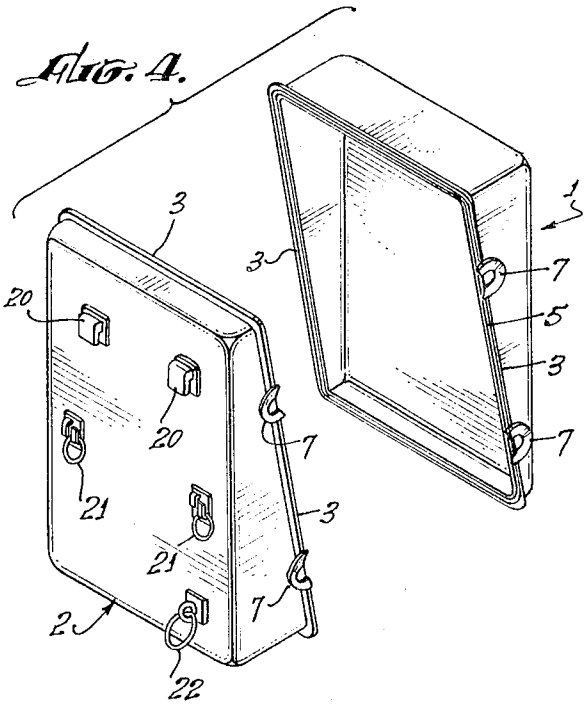


FIG. 5.

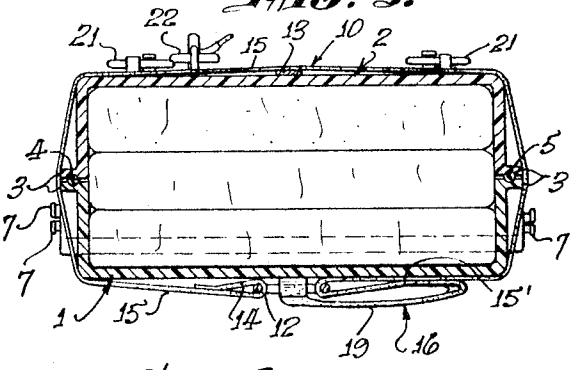


FIG. 7.

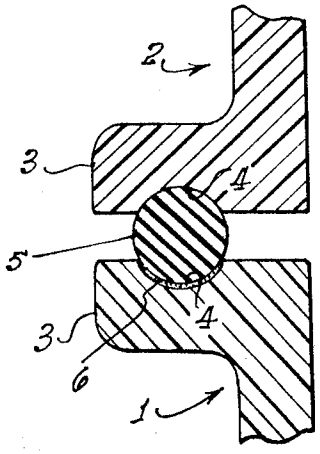
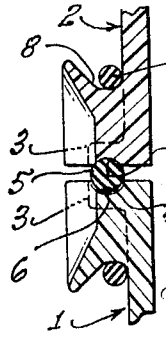


FIG. 6.



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3,266,655

CONTAINER FOR LIFE JACKETS AND THE LIKE

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Filed Oct. 24, 1963, Ser. No. 318,709
6 Claims. (Cl. 220—4)

This invention relates to buoyant lifesaving devices and more particularly to a container for life jackets or similar articles adapted, among other uses, to protect them from disintegration from exposure while, at the same time, keeping them instantly accessible for use.

The principal object of the invention is to provide a life jacket containing means effective to keep one or more life jackets or equivalent devices contained therein completely sealed and being closed by means effective to permit instant opening of the container for access to the contents thereof.

Another object of the invention is to provide a container for life jackets or similar aticles which is sealed so as to be buoyant and which is capable of being mounted on a vessel in such a manner as to float free to the surface at the end of a tie line in the event of sinking of the vessel, whereby, it serves optionally to be available for survivors at the surface or if thus not needed, to provide a marker for the location of the hulk.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a container for life jackets or equivalent articles in which the foregoing objectives are realized in practice and which, for the most part, is formed from duplicate parts held together by strap means designed for instant release with resultant instant access to the contents of the container.

A still further object of the invention is to provide a container for life jackets or equivalent articles which is formed, in part, at least, from transparent plastic whereby the contents of the container are exposed to view for instant visual identification of the contents.

With the foregoing objects in view, together with such additional objects and advantages as may subsequently appear, the invention resides in the parts, and in the construction, combination and arrangement of parts described, by way of example, in the following specification of a presently preferred embodiment of the invention, reference being had to the accompanying drawings which form a part of said specification and in which drawings:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a portion of the cockpit of a boat with a pair of containers embodying the present invention mounted on the walls thereof,

FIG. 2 is an enlarged, front perspective view of a presently preferred embodiment of the device,

FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of the device shown in FIG. 2,

FIG. 4 is an exploded perspective view of the front and back units of the container,

FIG. 5 is a transverse sectional view taken on the line 5—5 of FIG. 3,

FIG. 6 is an enlarged scale, fragmentary sectional view taken on the line 6—6 of FIG. 3 and rotated 90° clockwise,

FIG. 7 is a greatly enlarged, fragmentary sectional view taken on the line 7—7 of FIG. 3 and rotated 90° clockwise showing the gasket means interposed between the container components,

FIG. 8 is an enlarged fragmentary sectional view taken on the staggered line 8—8 of FIG. 2 showing the mode of release of the primary securing means, and

FIG. 9 is a further enlarged, fragmentary section taken on the line 9—9 of FIG. 2 showing further details of the primary securing means.

Referring to the drawings, the illustrated embodiment of the invention comprises a container or case of generally rectangular or box-like configuration as viewed from any face thereof and being of greater length than width and of greater width than thickness and the edges and corners preferably being rounded; said container being preferably formed of molded plastic and comprising a front half 1 and a rear half 2. As molded, the said halves are identical interiorly and differ only in that after molding, the one to be employed as the rear half may be provided with certain means for increasing the utility of the container but which, per se, are not essential to the primary objective of providing a container which is capable of being instantly opened for access to life jackets or equivalent devices contained therein.

The containers are formed so that the meeting lines of the edges are closer to the front edge at one end thereof and to the rear face thereof at the opposite end, or, in other words, the meeting faces of the halves lie in a plane disposed at an acute angle to parallel planes containing the front and rear faces of the container and which intersects those planes at points beyond the ends of the container. To describe it in other words, the lane of the meeting faces of the halves is disposed at an acute angle to a plane containing a face of the container which is not intersected by said meeting faces. The purpose of this novel line of juncture between the halves of the container will be apparent in the description of the mode of opening it for access to the contents. The meeting faces of the halves are formed by outwardly extending flange portions 3 provided, between the outer and inner faces thereof with a groove 4 for reception of a resilient gasket 5 which is preferably of circular cross section and which is preferably secured in one of the said grooves by adhesive 6. Adjacent each end of the diagonally extending portions of the flanges 3 they are interrupted by mirror image halves of transversely extending oval flanges 7, 7 providing grooves 8 in which elastic O-rings 9 may be seated to hold the halves together preferably along one side only thereof; said O-ring elements constituting a secondary securing means for interconnecting the halves of the container.

The primary means for holding the halves of the container comprises a strap 10 having one end 11 fixed to a ring 12 which is disposed at about the center of the front side of the front half 1 and thence extending around the circumference of the joined halves in a run 13 disposed at the mid-width of the container and through the ring 12 from the side thereof which is adjacent to the front face of the half 1. The other end, 14, of the strap 10 is similarly attached to the ring 12 and thence extends around the circumference of the mid-width of the container in a run 15 and thence extends through the ring 12 from the same side as the reach 13. Actually, the reaches 13 and 15 are arranged about the container in their respective positions with the loop 16 formed by the surplus portions thereof being pulled through the ring 12. The outer faces of the strap reaches 13 and 15 adjacent to the ring 12 carry one component of a flexible interlocking means known as "Velcro" and the limbs 13' and 15' of the loop 16 which are pulled through the ring 12 and which, when the strap is tightened, will be adjacent to the ring carry the other components of said interlocking means, whereby, upon being tightened, the limbs of the loop 16 are pressed against the corresponding portions of the respective reaches as at 17 and 18 effecting releasable interlocking of the "Velcro" areas with a bight 19 of the strap 16 extending between the ends of those areas which are remote from the ring 12.

When it is desired to obtain access to the container, it is necessary only to grasp the said bight **19** of the loop **16** and pull it outwardly thus releasing the "Velcro" interlocking means and releasing the loop **16** for passage through through the ring **12** with resultant complete release of the halves **1** and **2** from each other or, at least, free to hinge open if the flanges **7**, **7** along one edge are secured by rubber bands or O-rings. When thus opened, the life jacket or jackets or equivalent articles contained in the container are free to be pulled out, the shallow ends of the halves formed by the diagonal plane of the faces of the halves insuring that the contents will be free to be grasped and used and, actually, upon thus releasing the strap **10**, the contents of the container will fall free from the container.

For convenient installation on a boat, dock, or the like, the rear face of the container half **2** may be provided with one or more hooks **20** by which the container may be hung on a staple or bar on a wall or bulk-head and with one or more rings **21** which may be similarly employed. Additionally, a third ring such as ring **22**, may be connected to one end of a line **23** which may be wound on a reel **24** or other appropriate means whereby, in the event that the vessel sinks and one of the containers happens not be used, the container, being buoyant, will disengage itself and float to the surface while remaining fixed to the hulk of the vessel by the line and thus serving as a marker.

In this connection, mention has been made that it is not necessary that both halves of the container be formed from transparent plastic material. It will be obvious that it is preferable that the outer or front half be transparent to inform those unfamiliar with safety apparatus of the nature of the contents. It is also obvious that if at least one of the container halves is formed from a luminescent plastic material or is transparent and has the inner surface thereof coated with metal by the vapor process so as to give it a highly reflective characteristic, the floating container may be more readily spotted from the air, thus enhancing its value as a location indicating means.

While in the foregoing specification, there has been disclosed a presently preferred embodiment of the invention, it is not to be deemed that the invention is limited to the precise details of construction thus disclosed by way of example, and it will be understood that the invention includes as well, all such changes and modifications in the parts, and in the construction, combination and arrangement of parts as shall come within the purview of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A container for life jackets and like instrumentalities comprising a case formed of interiorly identical halves provided with complementary meeting faces and one of said halves carrying a resilient gasket on the meeting face portion thereof effective to cooperate with the meeting face of the other of said halves to provide a seal for the joint formed by said meeting faces and said gasket, and means for releasably holding said halves together to form said case; said means comprising a strap having a portion

thereof extending in a first run about said halves in one circumference of said case and a second portion extending in a second run about a circumference of said case disposed at right angles to said first named circumference; said strap having means associated with each of said portions manually operable separately to separately secure each of said runs in desired degrees of tightness about said case, and also having manually operable means for simultaneously releasing both of said securing means.

2. A container for life jackets and like instrumentalities as claimed in claim **1** in which the exterior face of one of said halves is provided with means affording the mounting thereof on a vertical surface.

3. A container for life jackets and like instrumentalities as claimed in claim **1** in which said case is of box-like configuration and in which said meeting faces define and lie in a plane disposed at an acute angle to a plane containing an exterior face of said case not intersected by said meeting faces.

4. A container for life jackets and like instrumentalities as claimed in claim **1** in which each of said meeting faces comprises a flange extending laterally outwardly from the surfaces of said case intersected by said meeting faces.

5. A container for life jackets and like instrumentalities as claimed in claim **1** in which said gasket is secured to one of said meeting faces and engages a groove in the other of said meeting faces to effect alignment of said halves in addition to serving as a sealing means.

6. A container for life jackets and like instrumentalities as claimed in claim **3** in which said strap means includes a flexible strap having both ends thereof attached to a ring element, in which one end portion of said strap extends from said ring element about one circumference of said case and thence through said ring element from the side thereof adjacent the outer surface of said case, in which the other end portion of said strap extends from said ring element around a circumference of said case at right angles to said first circumference and thence through said ring element from the same side thereof as said first end portion and combining with said first end portion to form a loop by which said end portions may be tightened about both said circumferences of said case and interlocking means on each leg of said loop and the portions of said end portions adjacent to said first named side of said ring element operable to releasably secure each leg of said loop to the portion of said strap from which it extends.

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