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G. INGRAM, JR

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LIFE-SAVING APPARATUS FOR USE AT SEA

Filed March 25, 1957

Fig.1.

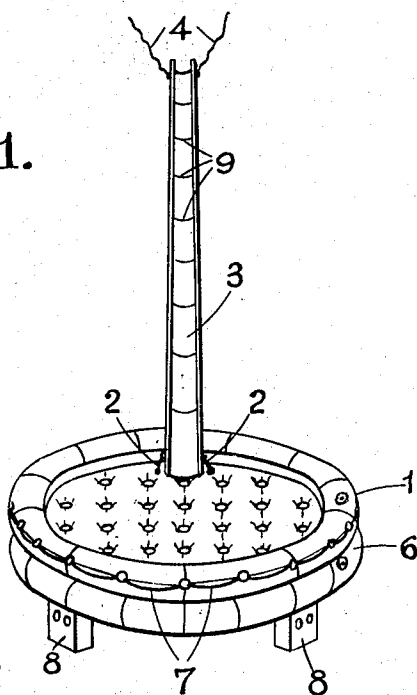


Fig.3.

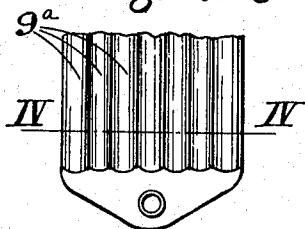


Fig.4.

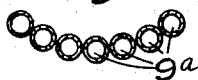
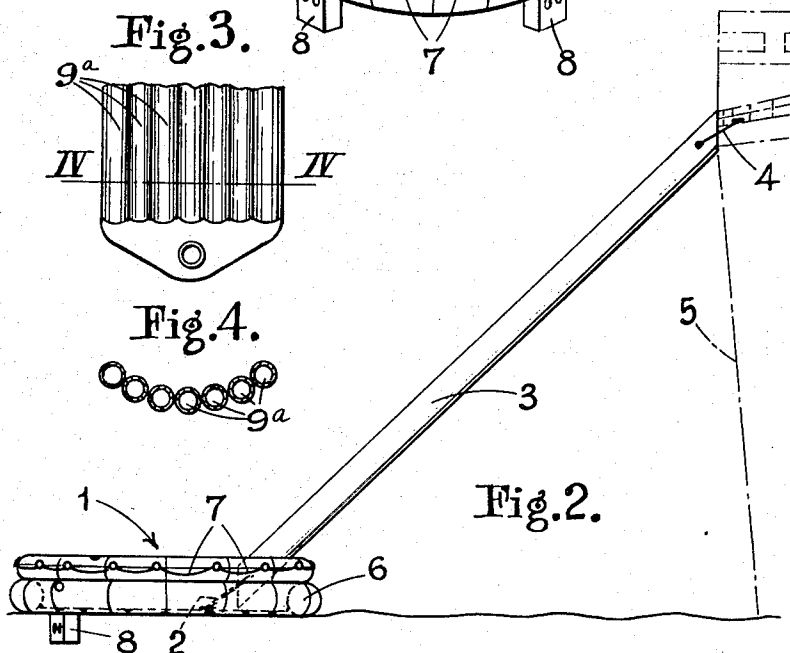


Fig.2.



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LIFE-SAVING APPARATUS FOR USE AT SEA

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1 Claim. (Cl. 9—14)

This invention relates to improvements in escape and life-saving apparatus for use at sea and has for its primary object to obviate the need for jumping from a sinking ship into the sea for the purpose of swimming to and clambering into a life-raft.

In its broadest sense the invention comprises a flexible and collapsible inflatable chute combined with an inflatable raft said chute being provided with means for attachment both to a deck structure of a ship and to the raft.

In order that the said invention may be readily understood an embodiment thereof will be described by way of example with the aid of the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective front diagrammatic view;
Figure 2 is a side diagrammatic view;

Figure 3 is a fragmentary view of one end of a chute, and

Figure 4 is a cross section on line IV—IV of Figure 3.

In the drawings 1 depicts an inflated raft adapted at 2, 2 such as by eyed flaps, rings or other loops to be attached to a chute 3. The latter has rope or cord lashings 4.

When not in use the raft 1 is deflated and rolled up with the chute 3, the whole being housed in a locker or otherwise stowed on deck of a ship indicated at 5, Figure 2, with one end of the chute attached to part of the locker or other deck structure. In use the raft 1 and chute 3 are inflated and, with the raft attached to one end of the chute 3, the raft is thrown overboard whereupon people can escape by sliding down the chute into the raft. The latter may be any suitable form of inflatable raft such as those constructed to be floated away and carry survivors until picked up. Alternatively the raft is preferably a temporary or preliminary landing platform which can form a focal point for larger rafts and lifeboats to draw against so as to pick up the people who have disembarked by the chute. The rafts would also be able to use the platform as an anchoring and mustering hub so as to keep them together and thus make it easier for

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searching ships and aircraft to locate all survivors at once.

In the embodiment illustrated the raft 1 has a peripheral inflatable buoyancy chamber 6 with lifelines 7 and stabilising elements 8 underneath and an inflatable floor. One or more inflation units of the compressed gas type would be secured in position. This raft may be circular as shown or of any other suitable configuration. The chute may be made of plastic material or other suitable strong flexible substance impervious to air and is made of channel shape by the use of rigid transverse ribs 9 spaced along its entire length. When out of use it can be deflated and collapsed. At the point where it is attached to the raft i.e. where the eyes or the like 2 are located there may be a cushion or other shock absorber to augment the shock-absorbing properties of the base of the raft.

As shown in Figs. 3 and 4, the chute is made inflatable by means of a series of elongated inflatable tubes 9a extending from end to end and lying together edge to edge. This will impart a degree of rigidity when inflated for use combined with comfort, and render it buoyant should it fall or be thrown into the sea.

The method of attaching the chute at each end may be by a lashing with rope or cord, or alternatively by means of quick-release spring clips.

I claim:

Escape and life-saving apparatus for use at sea comprising an inflatable raft of flexible material which, in its deflated condition can be rolled up and stored in a compact space, a channel-sectioned inflatable chute of flexible material which, in its deflated condition, can be rolled up with said raft and stored therewith, said chute being connected at one end to said raft and comprising a plurality of elongated inflatable tubes extending from end to end and lying side-by-side relative to one another, and means at the other end of said chute permitting said other end to be attached to a ship whereby launching of said raft from a ship and setting up of said chute can be effected simply by inflating said raft and chute and throwing said raft overboard.

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