

C. RITSON.
LIFE RAFT.
APPLICATION FILED JULY 11, 1908.

Patented May 11, 1909.
2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

921,462.

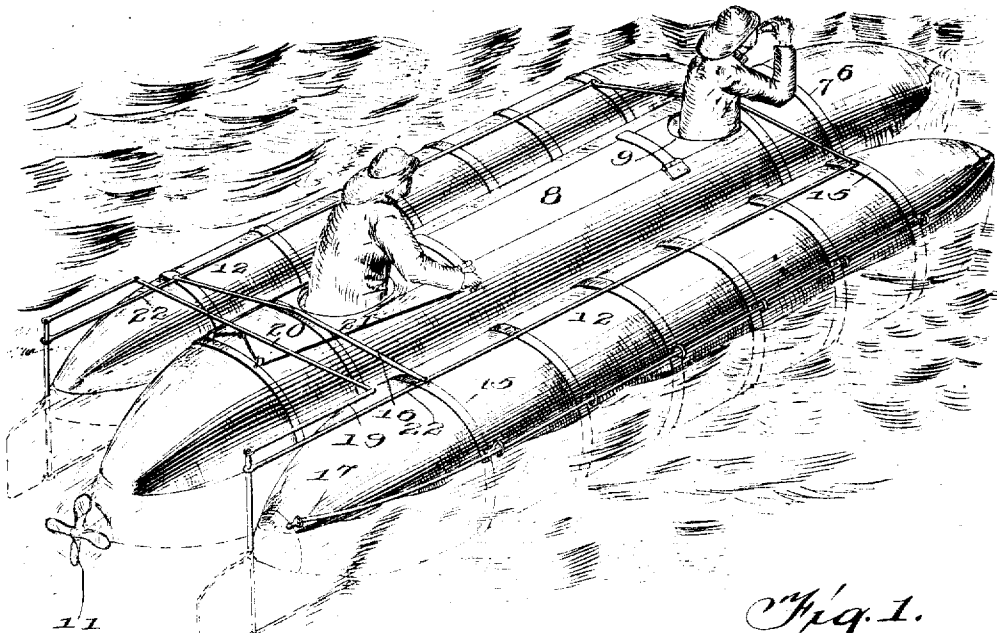


Fig. 1.

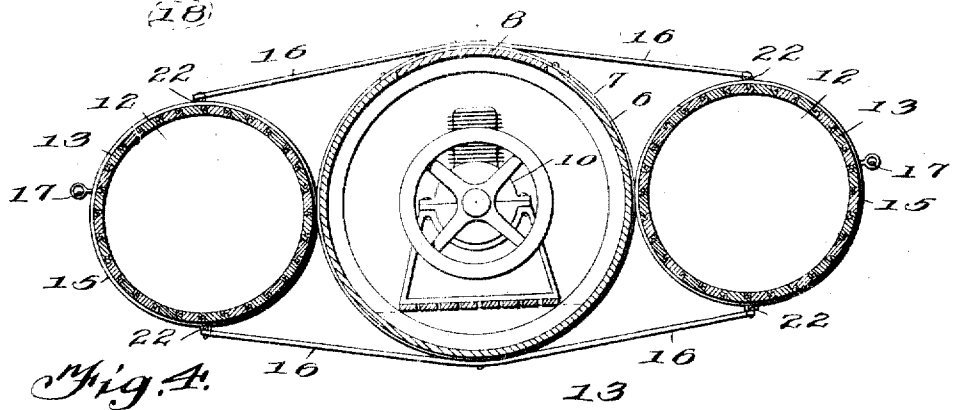


Fig. 4.

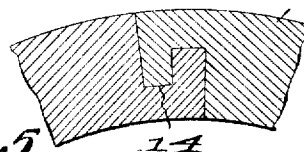


Fig. 5.

Witnesses
Geo. L. Shaw
Arthur M. Mearns

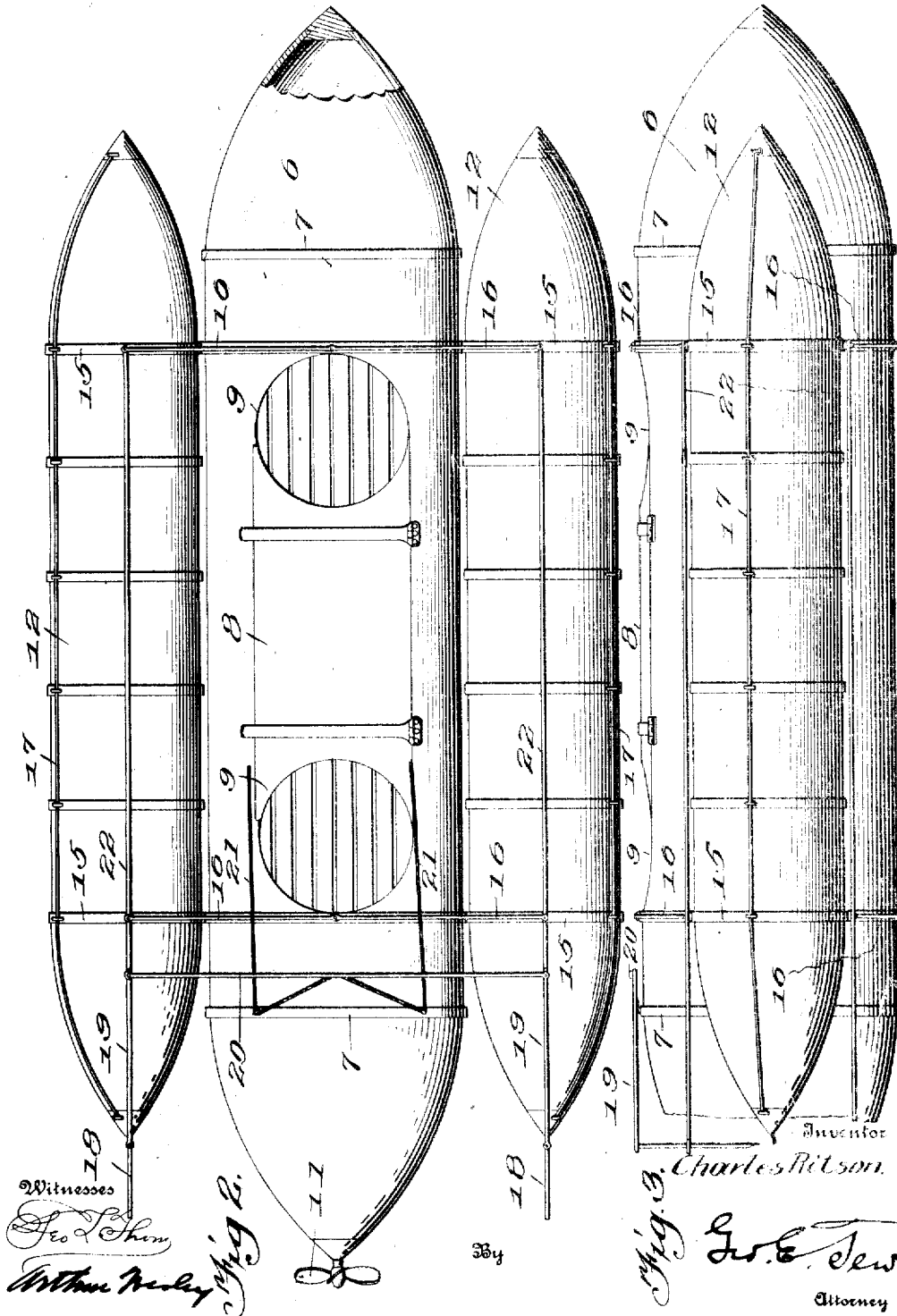
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921,462.

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2 SHEETS-SHEET 2.



UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

CHARLES RITSON, OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

LIFE-RAFT.

No. 921,462.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented May 11, 1909.

Application filed July 11, 1908. Serial No. 443,090.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, CHARLES RITSON, citizen of the United States, residing at St. Louis, in the county of St. Louis City and State of Missouri, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Life-Rafts, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to life rafts, and particularly to that class thereof having a central float, supported by two side floats in such a manner that the raft cannot be capsized.

A further feature of the invention is the provision of an electric motor in the central float, driving a propeller, forming a mobile float which is adapted for use either on board ship or in connection with life saving service.

The invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a perspective view illustrating the raft as in use; Fig. 2 is a top plan view; Fig. 3 is a side elevation; Fig. 4 is a cross section; and Fig. 5 is a detail in section of one of the joints between the staves of the side floats.

Referring specifically to the drawings, 6 indicates a central float preferably made of some light metal such as aluminum. This float is hollow and is pointed at both ends, and is strengthened by rings 7 extending around the same near the ends thereof. The float is provided with a hatch 8 hinged to open and close, and is of sufficient size to carry several people within the same. Access is had into the float by means of the hinged hatch, or by means of two man-holes 9 at the opposite ends of the hatch. In use, these man-holes will be occupied by the navigator and engineer of the raft, who will sit within the same with the upper part of the body exposed, as shown in Fig. 1. The central float is provided with an electric motor 10 which may be driven by storage batteries in the float, and which drives a propeller 11 at the stern. By keeping the storage batteries charged, the float will be ready for instant use at any time. The side floats 12, one of which is located at each side of the

central float, are also hollow, and are closed, and by reason of their location they prevent the raft from capsizing. They are preferably made of elongated wooden staves united at the edges by under-cut joints 14, which insure a solid and water tight compartment. These floats are strengthened by metal bands 15 extending around the same, and they are rigidly connected to the central float by means of upper and lower brace rods 16 secured to the hoops around the respective floats. Hand lines 17 extend along the outer sides of the side floats.

The raft is steered by means of rudders 18 at the rear of the side floats, and the tillers 19 are connected by a cross rod 20 so that the rudders move together. They are controlled by cords 21 leading to convenient position beside the rear man-hole, for operation by the steersman. A raft so constructed will support a considerable number of persons, either upon the raft or within the central float. The hoops 15 around the side floats are connected by longitudinal rods 22 which also serve to support the rudder posts.

The power provided for propelling the raft makes it superior to ordinary rafts which lack any such means of propulsion, and therefore permits the device to be used when an ordinary raft or life boat could not be employed. The raft is of little draft and is comparatively light and buoyant, and hence for life saving service, especially, can be readily launched and driven under its own power to the place of a wreck.

I claim:

A life raft comprising a central tubular float and a pair of side floats, the former being provided with front and rear man-holes and an openable hatch extending from one man-hole to the other, the ends of the hatch forming part of the rim of the man-holes.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

CHARLES RITSON.

Witnesses:

H. E. ROSS,

A. VAN DAMME.