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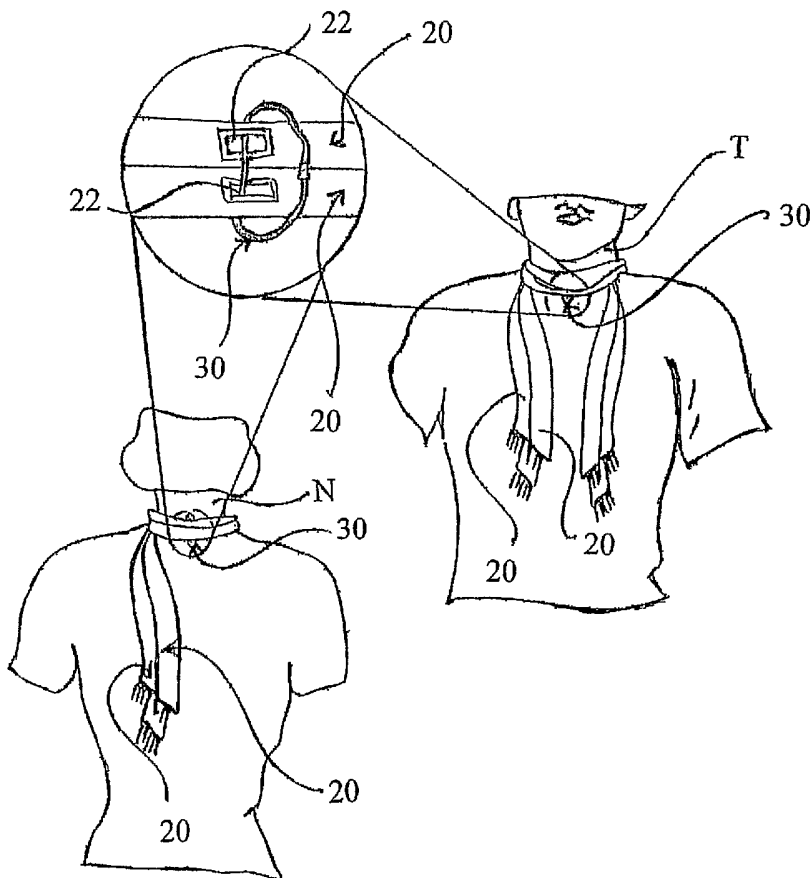
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(54) Title: GARMENT COUPLING SYSTEM AND METHOD OF USE THEREOF



(57) Abstract: A garment coupling system and method of use thereof, wherein the present system contemplates the structural modification of scarves and/or other selected garments/accessories via the incorporation of a peripherally-reinforced aperture discretely positioned on the garment body; thereby, enabling a plurality of such structurally-modified garments to be coupled, and, thus, commonly bound by inserting or feeding an associated fastener or coupling device through the aligned apertures of each such garment.

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

GARMENT COUPLING SYSTEM AND METHOD OF USE THEREOF

Be it known that I, BRIDGET DOBSON, residing at 3650 Tuxedo
5 Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30305, of the United States, have
invented certain new and useful improvements in a Garment
Coupling System and Method of Use Thereof, of which the
following is a specification.

10 **CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION**

To the full extent permitted by law, the present Patent
Cooperation Treaty Application claims priority to and the
15 benefit of United State Non-Provisional patent application
entitled "Garment Coupling System and Method of Use Thereof,"
serial number not yet assigned, filed on March 24, 2006, on
behalf of inventor Bridget Dobson, and United States Provisional
patent application entitled "Garment Coupling System and Method
20 of Use Thereof," having assigned Serial No. 60/666,003, filed on
March 29, 2005, on behalf of inventor Bridget Dobson.

TECHNICAL FIELD

25 The present invention relates generally to garment securing
products, and more specifically to a garment coupling system and
method of use thereof. The present invention is particularly
useful for securely coupling or binding a plurality of scarves
around a user's neck and, thus, maintaining the scarves in
30 aesthetic alignment.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Whether adorned with business suits, formal or casual
5 seasonal wear, women's fashion scarves or neck sashes are often
one of the many accessorizing garments included in their
wardrobe. Indeed, women typically adorn a plurality of such
scarves with their outfits, usually fastening the selected
grouping around the neck via a common knot, broach, safety pin,
10 or the like, in an effort to prevent independent shifting of the
individual scarves relative to one another and, thus, maintain
the scarves in aesthetic alignment.

Unfortunately, coupling or binding the scarves or other
15 selected garments with such available fasteners and/or fastening
methods usually results in irreparable damage to the delicate
garment/scarf fabric, such as pulled threads, unsightly
pinholes, and/or stubborn wrinkles. Additionally, common knots,
broaches, safety pins, or the like, often fail to provide the
20 requisite level of aesthetics sought by the garment wearer, and
further fail to adequately maintain the scarves in an aligned
fashion.

Therefore, it is readily apparent that there is a need for
25 a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, wherein the
user may effortlessly combine a plurality of scarves or other
selected garments and/or garment accessories specifically

designed to receive certain fasteners or couplers adapted to engage the selected grouping of garments/accessories without damaging, piercing or otherwise structurally disrupting the integrity of the fabric body. There is a further need for such a system and method that provides consistent alignment of multiple adorned scarves, or other suitable garments or accessories, and, thus, the desired aesthetic appeal during wear of same.

10

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly described, in a preferred embodiment, the present invention overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages, and meets the recognized need for such a device by providing a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, wherein the present system contemplates the structural modification of scarves and/or other selected garments/accessories via the incorporation of a peripherally-reinforced aperture discretely positioned on the garment body; thereby, enabling a plurality of such structurally-modified garments to be coupled, and, thus, commonly bound by inserting or feeding an associated fastener or coupling device through the aligned apertures of each such garment.

25

According to its major aspects and broadly stated, the present invention in its preferred form is a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, generally comprising a

stitching-reinforced slit formed through a garment, and a structurally flexible or rigid fastener engagable through the stitching-reinforced slits of a plurality of such garments.

5 More specifically, the present invention is a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, comprising a stitching-reinforced slit formed through a garment (i.e., scarves, sashes, etc.), wherein a plurality of such garments, each comprising a stitching-reinforced slit, may be grouped and
10 securely coupled around the wearer's neck or other suitable body region, via insertion of either a structurally flexible or rigid fastener through the aligned stitching-reinforced slits of the grouped garments. Each such flexible fastener may be in the form of a simple fabric strap (i.e., formed from identical or
15 similarly patterned/textured fabric as the scarves/garments), fabric-covered elastic strap, metal chain, or the like, comprising cooperatively-engagable fasteners disposed at the terminal ends thereof, such as, for exemplary purposes only, jewelry clasps, magnetic clasp/studs, hook-and-eye clasps, slide
20 clasps, fold-over arrangements, lobster claw clasps, fish slides, assembled end caps, barrel clasps, toggle clasps, snap-button arrangements, slit-and-button arrangements, hook-and-loop fasteners, and the like. Each such rigid fastener may be in the form of clasps, closable pins, cuff links, and the like.

25

Accordingly, a feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide a system and method for coupling a plurality of garments and/or garment accessories.

5 Another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide a system and method for coupling a plurality of garments and/or garment accessories without damaging, piercing or otherwise structurally disrupting the integrity of the fabric body.

10

Still another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide stitching-reinforced slits, or other peripherally-reinforced apertures, formed in a plurality of commonly combined garments/accessories (i.e., scarves) so as to enable the combination of same via effortless application of associated flexible or rigid fasteners through the aligned slits of overlapping garments.

20 Yet another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide a technology adaptable to a variety of garments, including, without limitation, scarves, sashes, shawls, general neckwear, wrist-adorned sashes or scarves, and the like.

25 These and other features and advantages of the invention will become more apparent to one skilled in the art from the

following description and claims when read in light of the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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The present invention will be better understood by reading the Detailed Description of the Preferred and Alternate Embodiments with reference to the accompanying drawing figures, in which like reference numerals denote similar structure and refer to like elements throughout, and in which:

10

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a flexible fastener of a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, shown open;

15

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a flexible fastener of a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, shown closed;

20

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a rigid fastener of a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, shown open;

25

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a rigid fastener of a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, shown closed;

FIGS. 5A-5C are perspective views of a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, shown in use with application of the flexible fastener of FIGS. 1-2; and,

5

FIGS. 6A-6C are perspective views of a garment coupling system and method of use thereof, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, shown in use with application of the rigid fastener of FIGS. 3-4.

10

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED
AND ALTERNATIVE EMBODIMENTS

To the full extent permitted by law, the present Patent
15 Cooperation Treaty Application claims priority to and the
benefit of United State Non-Provisional patent application
entitled "Garment Coupling System and Method of Use Thereof,"
serial number not yet assigned, filed on March 24, 2006, on
behalf of inventor Bridget Dobson, and United States Provisional
20 patent application entitled "Garment Coupling System and Method
of Use Thereof," having assigned Serial No. 60/666,003, filed on
March 29, 2005, on behalf of inventor Bridget Dobson.

In describing the preferred and alternate embodiments of
25 the present invention, as illustrated in FIGS. 1-6C, specific
terminology is employed for the sake of clarity. The invention,
however, is not intended to be limited to the specific

terminology so selected, and it is to be understood that each specific element includes all technical equivalents that operate in a similar manner to accomplish similar functions.

5 Referring now to **FIGS. 1-6C**, the present invention in its preferred embodiment is a garment coupling system **10** and method of use thereof, generally comprising garments **20**, flexible fastener **30** and/or rigid fastener **40**.

10 Specifically, garments **20** are preferably a plurality of scarves commonly adorned around a wearer's neck. However, it should be recognized that the technology of the present invention may be selectively applied to a variety of garments, including, without limitation, sashes, shawls, general neckwear,
15 wrist-adorned sashes or scarves, and the like.

Preferably positioned proximate the mid-region of each garment **20** is a stitching-reinforced opening or slit **22**. Stitching-reinforced slit **22** preferably provides an annealed or
20 strengthened aperture through which flexible fastener **30** or rigid fastener **40** may be inserted to couple or bundle a plurality of such garments **20**, as more fully described below. As such, stitching-reinforced slits **22** of garments **20** effectively nullify conventional methods of garment coupling
25 requiring piercing of the garment fabrics via pins or broaches, which might otherwise lend to aesthetically displeasing

pinholes, pulled threads, irrevocable damage to the garment fabric, and/or the like.

Although stitching-reinforced slits 22 provide the preferred structural and functional features for implementation of the present system and method 10, it should be recognized that other suitable apertures or slots may be appropriately formed through garments 20, wherein the periphery of such apertures or slots may be reinforced via fabric, metal (i.e., grommets), film, or the like. Additionally, it should be recognized that each garment 20 may comprise any selected number of such stitching-reinforced slits 22, apertures, or slots, to facilitate implementation of the present system and method 10. Moreover, stitching-reinforced slit 22, or any selected variant or number thereof, may be disposed on garment 20 at any selected position, depending on the type of garment and/or common method of wear associated therewith. Furthermore, it should be recognized that when dealing with garments 20 of multiple plies or layers, slits 22, or any of the above-described variants thereof, may be formed through one or more of such plies or layers.

Preferably, flexible fastener 30 may be in the form of a simple fabric strap (i.e., formed from identical or similarly patterned/textured fabric as garment 20 - "self-fabric" - so as to promote "blending" or concealment of fastener 30 therewith), fabric-covered elastic strap (i.e., also may be formed from

self-fabric), metal chain, a ribbon (for tying into a bow), or the like, comprising cooperatively-engagable fasteners 32, 34 disposed at the terminal ends thereof, such as, for exemplary purposes only, jewelry clasps, magnetic clasp/studs, hook-and-eye clasps, slide clasps, fold-over arrangements, lobster claw clasps, fish slides, assembled end caps, barrel clasps, toggle clasps, snap-button arrangements, slit-and-button arrangements, hook-and-loop fasteners, and the like.

10 Preferably, rigid fastener 40 may be in the form of clasps, closable pins, cuff links, and the like, wherein rigid fastener 40 may comprise structural enhancements to enable the attachment of broaches, or other decorative jewelry thereto, so as to facilitate concealment of rigid fastener 40 during use. Rigid
15 fastener 40 may be formed from any suitable material, such as, for exemplary purposes only, metal or plastic.

Referring now more specifically to FIGS. 5A-6C, in use, a plurality of such scarves or garments 20, each comprising a
20 stitching-reinforced slit 22, are preferably grouped and selectively oriented (i.e., juxtaposed, overlapped, adjacently-disposed, or the like) around a user's neck N and throat T, such that each such stitching-reinforced slit 22 of each garment 20 is preferably substantially aligned (see FIGS. 5C and 6C).
25 Preferably, garments 20 are positioned around the user's neck N and throat T regions such that slits 22 face inwardly thereagainst, wherein positioning of slits 22 against the user's

neck **N** and/or throat **T** facilitate concealment (if desired) of subsequently applied flexible fastener **30** and/or rigid fastener **40**. That is, either flexible fastener **30** and/or rigid fastener **40** is appropriately inserted or fed through slits **22** of garments **20**, and thereafter secured. It is contemplated that a plurality of flexible fasteners **30** and/or rigid fasteners **40** may be utilized to coupled garments **30**.

It is contemplated that garments **20** may require folding to facilitate appropriate wear over or across the user's neck or throat, and, as such, each slit **22** may be suitably positioned over each garment **20**, and/or provided in multiple numbers thereover, to comply with the various methods of garment folding and wear; thus, facilitating implementation of the present system and method **10**.

Having thus described exemplary embodiments of the present invention, it should be noted by those skilled in the art that the within disclosures are exemplary only, and that various other alternatives, adaptations, and modifications may be made within the scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the present invention is not limited to the specific embodiments illustrated herein, but is limited only by the following claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for coupling a plurality of garments, said system comprising:

5 a plurality of slits, wherein each garment of said plurality of garments comprises at least one slit of said plurality of slits; and,

a fastener, wherein said fastener is inserted through each said slit of each said garment.

10

2. The system of Claim 1, wherein said plurality of slits comprise stitching-reinforced slits.

3. The system of Claim 1, wherein said plurality of slits
15 comprise peripherally-reinforced apertures or slots.

4. The system of Claim 1, wherein said plurality of garments is selected from the group consisting of scarves, sashes, shawls, general neckwear, wrist-adorned sashes, wrist-adorned
20 scarves, and combinations thereof.

5. The system of Claim 1, wherein said fastener is a flexible fastener selected from the group consisting of fabric straps, fabric straps formed from identical or similarly patterned or
25 textured fabric as said garments, fabric-covered elastic straps, fabric-covered elastic straps formed from identical or similarly

patterned or textured fabric as said garments, metal chains, and combinations thereof.

6. The system of Claim 5, wherein said flexible fastener
5 comprises cooperatively-engagable fasteners disposed at terminal ends thereof.

7. The system of Claim 1, wherein said fastener is a rigid
fastener selected from the group consisting of clasps, cuff
10 links, closable pins, and combinations thereof.

8. A method for coupling a plurality of garments, said method comprising the steps of:

forming at least one peripherally-reinforced slit in each
15 garment of said plurality of garments;

inserting a fastener through each said slit of each said garment; and,

securing said fastener.

20 9. A system for coupling a plurality of garments, said system comprising:

an opening formed through at least one garment of said plurality of garments; and,

a fastener, wherein said fastener is inserted through said
25 opening of said at least one garment, and wherein at least a portion of said plurality of garments is coupled to said at least one garment via said fastener.

10. The system of Claim 9, wherein said opening is stitching-reinforced.

5 11. The system of Claim 9, wherein said opening is peripherally-reinforced.

12. The system of Claim 9, wherein said plurality of garments is selected from the group consisting of scarves, sashes,
10 shawls, general neckwear, wrist-adorned sashes, wrist-adorned scarves, and combinations thereof.

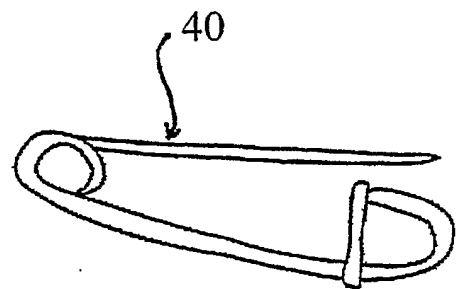
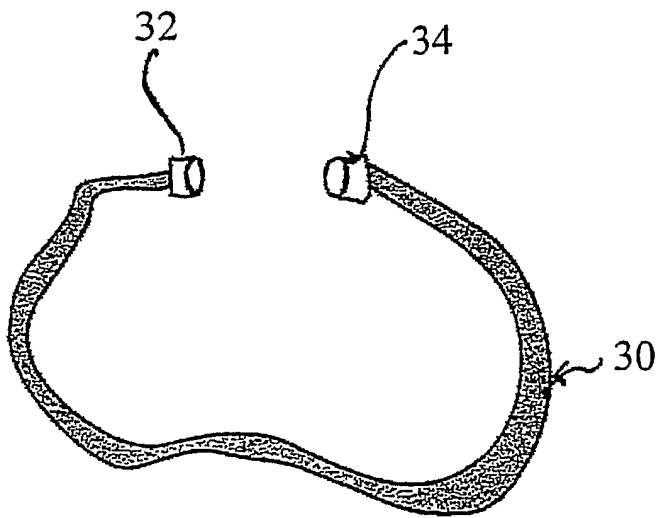
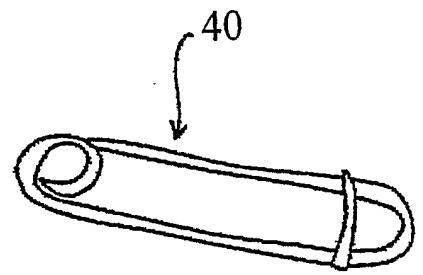
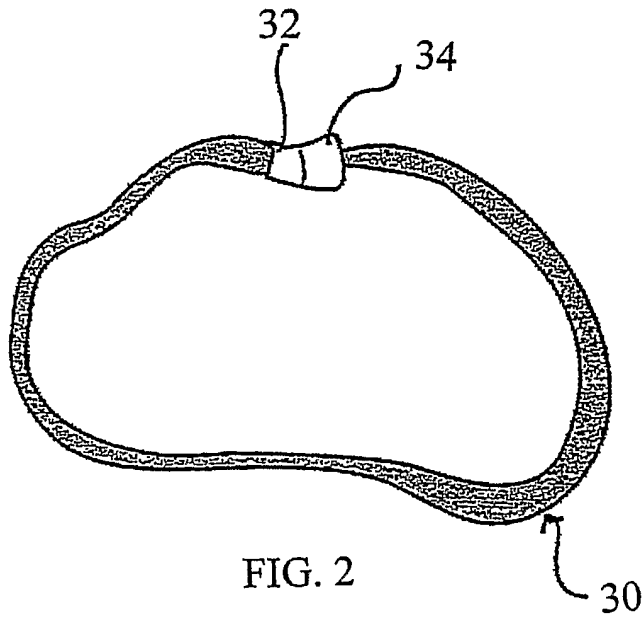
13. The system of Claim 9, wherein said fastener is a flexible fastener selected from the group consisting of fabric straps,
15 fabric straps formed from identical or similarly patterned or textured fabric as said garments, fabric-covered elastic straps, fabric-covered elastic straps formed from identical or similarly patterned or textured fabric as said garments, metal chains, and combinations thereof.

20

14. The system of Claim 13, wherein said flexible fastener comprises cooperatively-engagable fasteners disposed at terminal ends thereof.

25 15. The system of Claim 9, wherein said fastener is a rigid fastener selected from the group consisting of clasps, cuff links, closable pins, and combinations thereof.

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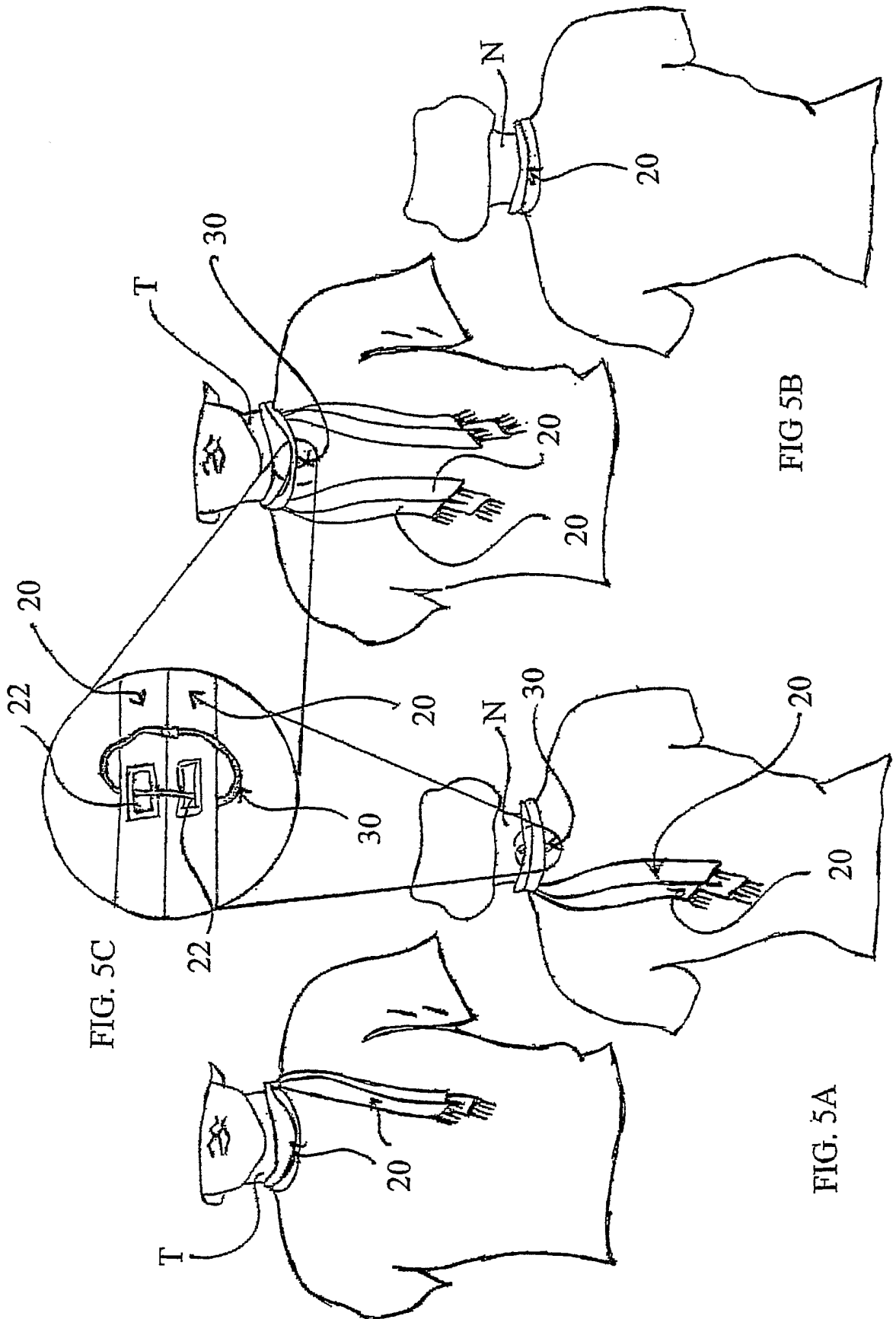


FIG. 5C

FIG 5B

FIG. 5A

