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LIFE JACKET

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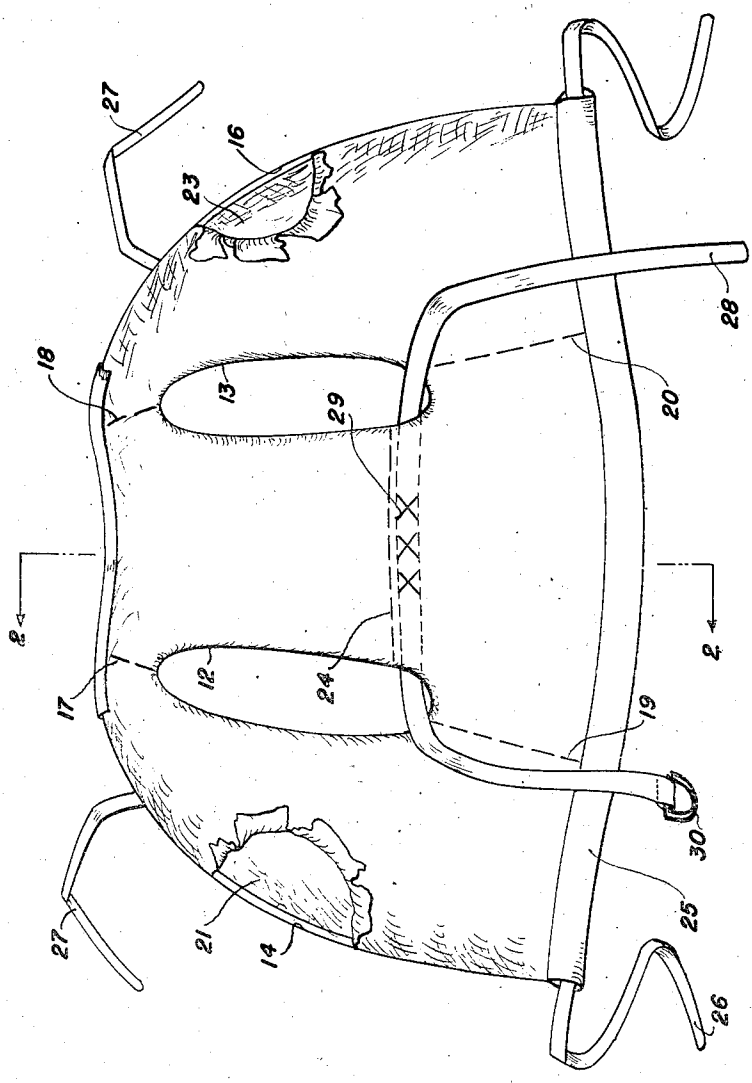


FIG. 1

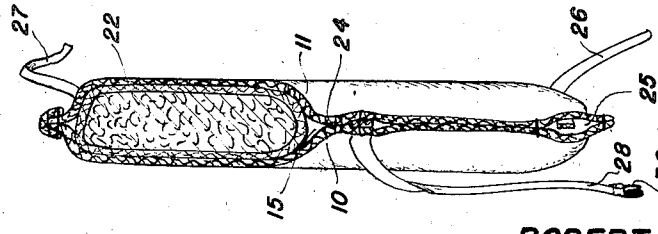


FIG. 2

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LIFE JACKET

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4 Claims. (Cl. 9—20)

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This invention relates to life preservers and more particularly to reversible life jackets adapted to be worn on the upper part of the body to support the wearer in an upright slightly backwardly inclined position when in the water.

Life jackets using kapok as the buoyant element, now required to be worn by all those aboard ships in wartime, must be provided with means for grasping and lifting the wearer when he is in the water in order to facilitate the rescue of such wearer, particularly when exhausted by reason of exposure or injury. Life jackets without such means cannot be easily grasped, and as rescue operations are invariably carried out in oil covered waters, the jackets become slippery and easily slide from the grasp of the rescuers with a consequent loss of life.

As these jackets are bulky, they must be removed by the wearer in the performance of some shipboard duties. Others remove the jackets surreptitiously because their bulk makes them uncomfortable to wear continuously. In emergencies it is therefore necessary that some persons must quickly don the jackets and as it is done amid considerable confusion and excitement, it is mandatory that the jacket be of simple design and one that may be put on with either side out.

The best lifting means for a life jacket, taking into consideration such factors as simplicity, safety, cost and ease of manufacture, is a belt adapted to be fastened around the wearer.

In those jackets heretofore used, one method of producing reversibility thereof is effected by providing two belts attached to opposite sides of the jacket so that one thereof would be outermost regardless of which side was placed next to the wearer. This arrangement is unsatisfactory for several reasons. First, when the jacket is worn, the free ends of the belt on the inside of the jacket hang below the lower edge of the jacket and tend to catch in doors, ladders, machinery, etc. Second, the free ends of the two belts become tangled with each other making the jacket difficult to put on and fasten with the result that the wearer would go overboard without having the belt fastened over his jacket. Once in the water it is difficult to untangle the belts and fasten the outermost thereof in position, particularly if the water is cold. Third, the use of two belts increases the material required and the number of manufacturing operations involved, both important factors as life preservers are now produced by the million each year. The other method, wherein one belt has been used

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with means making it accessible for placing it around the outside of the jacket regardless of which side is outermost, said means being in the form of apertures in the body of the jacket under the arm holes and through which the ends of the belt pass, increases the cost of manufacture by reasons of the increase in operations required, since each aperture must be cut and a buttonhole stitch, or the like, applied thereto to prevent raveling.

It is, therefore, the object of this invention to provide a reversible life jacket with a simplified means for affixing a unitary lifting belt thereto.

A further object of this invention is to attach a unitary lifting means to a reversible life jacket by utilizing the armholes thereof.

A further object of this invention is to mount a single lifting belt to a reversible life jacket so that the ends thereof project into the arm holes of the jacket to permit it to be placed over the front of the jacket regardless of which side is outermost.

In the accompanying drawings illustrating the present preferred embodiment of the invention, Fig. 1 is a plan view of the life jacket showing the arrangement of the lifting belt, while Fig. 2 is a sectional view of the life jacket shown in Fig. 1 taken along the line 2—2.

Referring to the drawings, the body of the jacket comprises two pieces of drill 10 and 11, one for either side, of the general configuration shown in Fig. 1, and having arm holes 12 and 13 cut therein. The pieces 10 and 11 are sewn around their outer edges and around the arm holes to form a cover of double thickness. The cover is divided into three vertical pockets 14, 15 and 16 by seams 17 and 18 running between the top of the arm holes 12 and 13 and the upper edge of the cover, and seams 19 and 20 at the sides connecting the bottom of the arm holes and the lower edge of the cover. That part of the cover forming pocket 15 comprises the back of the jacket when worn while that portion forming pockets 14 and 15 is adapted to fold around the front of the wearer to form the front of the jacket. This cover is treated with a suitable material to render it fireproof. Removable kapok pads 21, 22 and 23 are inserted in their respective pockets, pads 21 and 23 being visible through broken away portions of the cover. Pad 22 is about one-half the length of pads 21 and 23 and is designed to fit the upper half of pocket 15 while the other pads extend the full length of the pockets 14 and 16. Stitching 24, connecting the two pieces 10 and 11 and running across the

back pocket from a point adjacent the lower part of the arm holes, serves to retain the pad 22 in position in the pocket 15. A hem 25 in the lower edge of the jacket carries a drawstring 26 for fastening the jacket around the waist of the wearer. Ties 27, attached to the upper edge of the jacket, are provided to permit fastening the jacket at the throat of the wearer.

The lifting means whereby the wearer may be grasped either by hand, or by a boat hook, comprises a belt 28 adapted to be fastened around the jacket. This belt is placed between the pieces of drill 10 and 11 comprising the jacket cover in the pocket 15 just below and parallel to the stitching 24 and is securely stitched to the cover as indicated by stitching 29. The belt 28 extends horizontally across the back of the jacket between the lower adjacent edges of the arm holes 12 and 13 into which the ends of the belt pass. The cover and belt are stitched together at the arm holes to fix the belt with respect to the armholes in order that the ends of the belt may be held in a position easily accessible to the wearer of the jacket. The belt 28 is provided with suitable means for fastening the same over the front of the jacket, such as a buckle 30.

From the foregoing description it is readily seen that it is immaterial which side of the jacket is outermost when donned. If the belt ends happen to be on the outside of the jacket then it is merely necessary to grasp the same and buckle the belt over the front of the jacket. If the belt ends happen to be on the inside of the jacket when it is on the wearer, he merely grasps the belt at the arm holes and pulls the ends thereof therethrough and buckles them across the front of the jacket. By this construction the belt 28 takes all of the strain when used to lift the wearer of the jacket from the water and consequently the jacket need not be of special strength or construction. The arm holes 12 and 13 may be larger than those ordinarily needed in life jackets to facilitate the ease with which the belt 28 may be grasped and as the belt is affixed to the edges of the arm holes they are always held within easy reach of the wearer.

While the belt has been shown as one continuous strip placed between the pieces 10 and 11 comprising the cover, it is obvious that it may be sewn to the outside of either of the pieces 10 and 11 in substantially the same position with respect to the arm holes 12 and 13. In this construction the belt is affixed across the back of the jacket in such manner as to enable it to be grasped at the back of the jacket, thus providing an additional means for obtaining a hold on the wearer. For example, if the belt is affixed to the cover externally of the jacket, it may be sewn to the jacket only at the arm holes, leaving a portion thereof between the arm holes available for use as a means for obtaining a grip thereon.

In some cases it may be desirable to provide a belt composed of two sections, in which case each section would have one end attached to the jacket adjacent the arm hole, a construction permissible if the material of which the jacket is made is of sufficient strength to support the weight of the wearer.

While we have described the preferred form of

our invention we do not wish to limit ourselves to the precise details as shown, but wish to avail ourselves of such variations and modifications as may come within the scope of the appended claims.

The invention described herein may be manufactured and used by or for the Government of the United States of America for governmental purposes without the payment of any royalties thereon or therefor.

We claim:

1. A life preserver comprising a vest, there being a pair of arm holes in said vest, a belt attached to the back of said vest and extending from arm hole to arm hole and extending into said arm holes, the free ends of said belt adapted to be drawn through said arm holes whereby the said belt may be fastened around the outside of the vest regardless of which side is outermost.

2. A reversible life preserver comprising a sleeveless jacket, there being arm holes at the sides of said jacket, a belt affixed across the back of said jacket between the lower portion of the said arm holes and terminating therein and through which the free ends of said belt may be drawn, whereby said belt may be passed around the outside of the front of said jacket regardless of which side is outermost.

3. A reversible life preserver vest comprising a cover of double thickness, said cover being divided into two vertically extending front pockets and a back pocket, there being arm holes between each of the front pockets and the back pocket, bouyant material in the said front pockets and in the upper part only of the said back pocket, a belt affixed in the back pocket under the said buoyant material, the free ends of said belt attached to the periphery of said arm holes adjacent the said back pocket whereby the said belt may be fastened around the outside of the vest regardless of which side is outermost.

4. A reversible life preserver comprising a vest having a back therein, arm holes in said vest, a lifting belt, said belt fastened intermediate its ends across the back of said jacket from arm hole to arm hole, the said belt being attached to said jacket at said arm holes and passing therethrough, whereby the free ends of said belt may be drawn therethrough and fastened around the outside of the remainder of said vest regardless of which side is outermost.

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