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(54) **CONVERTIBLE CUSHION AND METHOD OF USING SAME**

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(76) **Inventor: Joseph Riccelli, Pittsburgh, PA (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

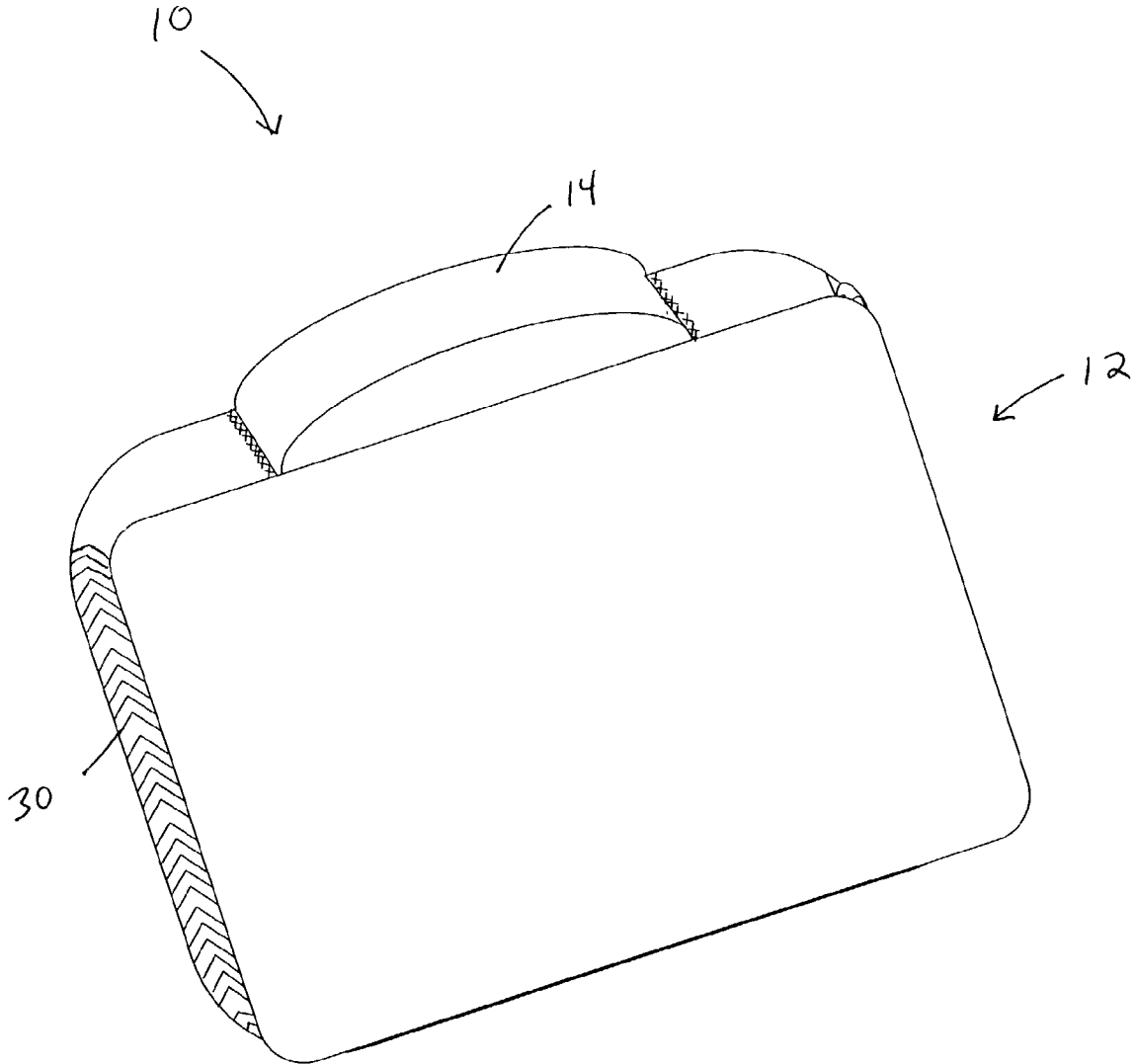
Correspondence Address:

**BENESCH, FRIEDLANDER, COPLAN & ARONOFF LLP**  
**ATTN: IP DEPARTMENT DOCKET CLERK**  
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**200 PUBLIC SQUARE**  
**CLEVELAND, OH 44114 (US)**

A convertible cushion comprising a flexible body having first and second surfaces bordered by a perimeter wherein the flexible body exhibits a longitudinal centerline that bisects the flexible body into first and second sides; first releasable fastening means disposed on the flexible body for retaining the flexible body in a folded configuration; and second releasable fastening means disposed about at least a portion of the perimeter of the flexible body for retaining the flexible body in a sleeping configuration when the flexible body is folded along the longitudinal centerline. The cushion may also be converted into a blanket and a parka.

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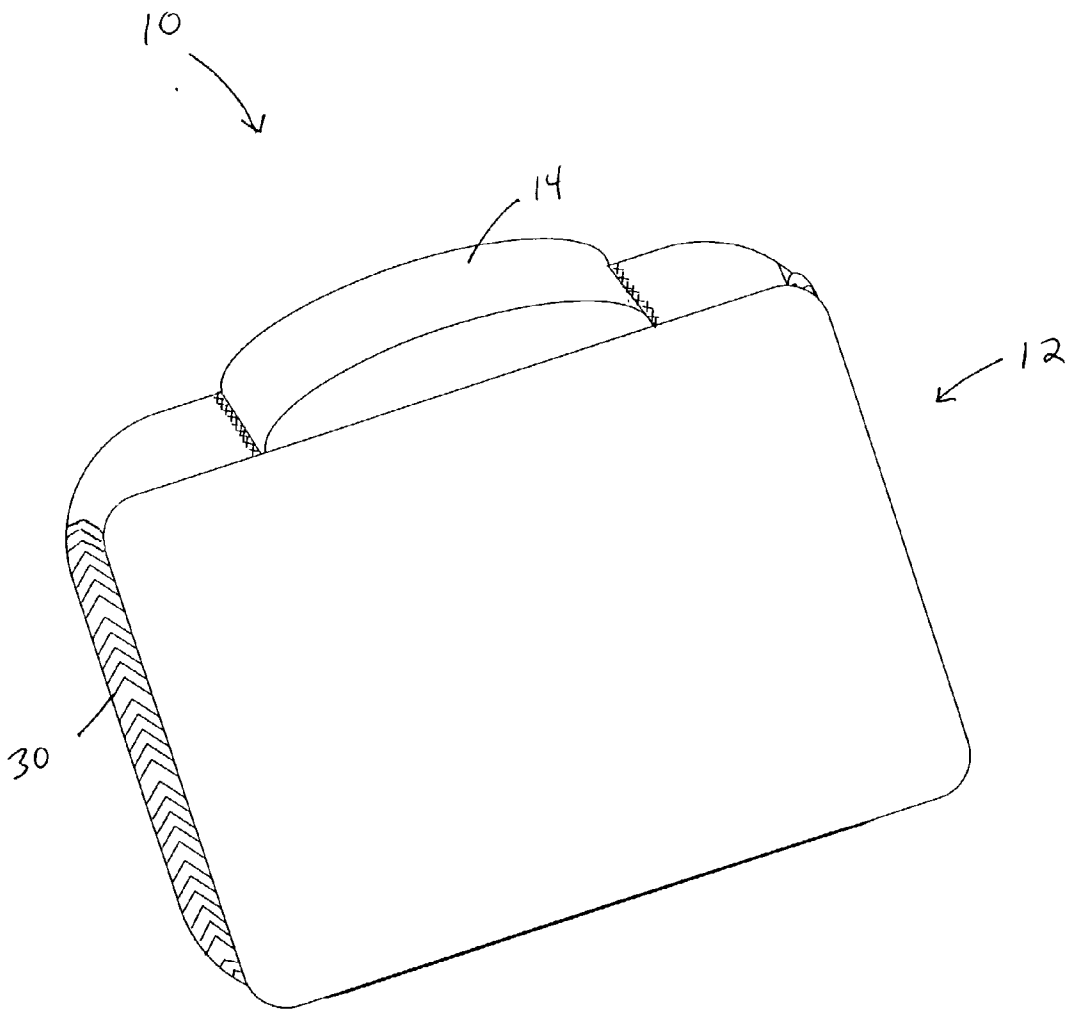


Fig. 1

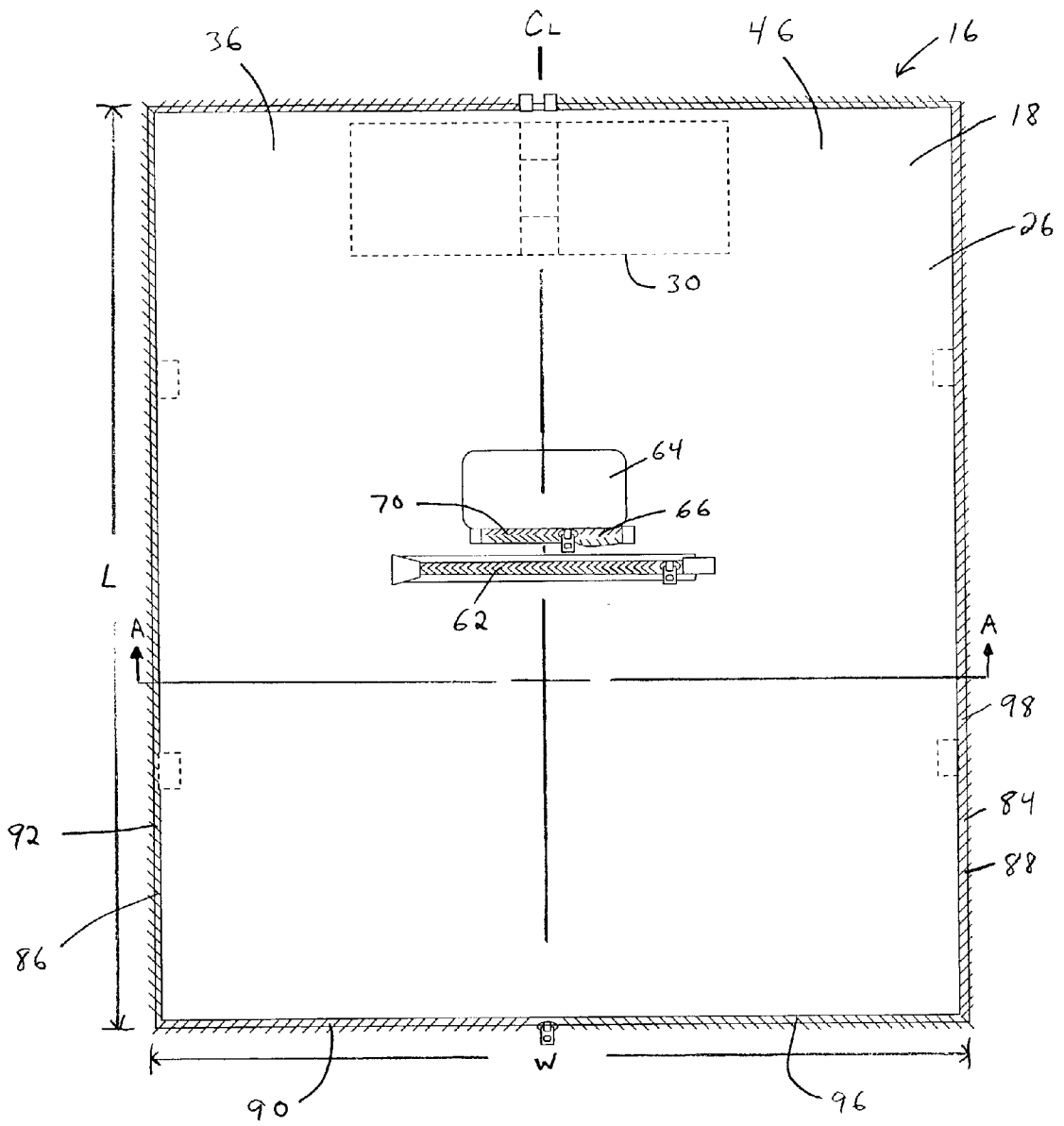


Fig. 2A

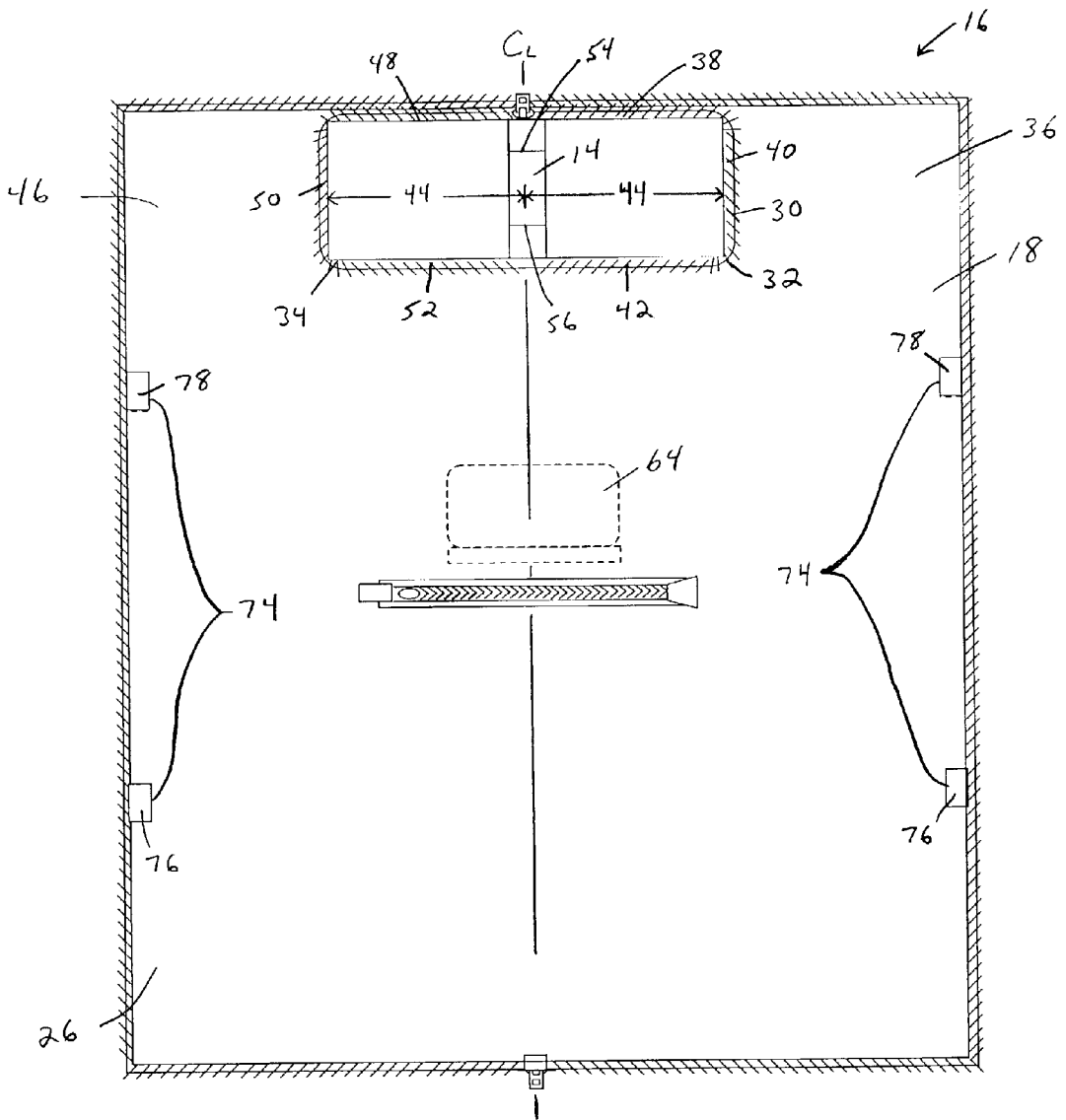


Fig. 2B

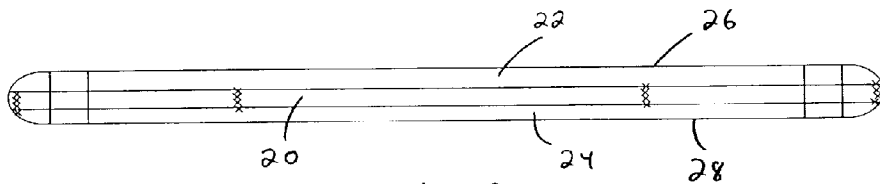


Fig. 3

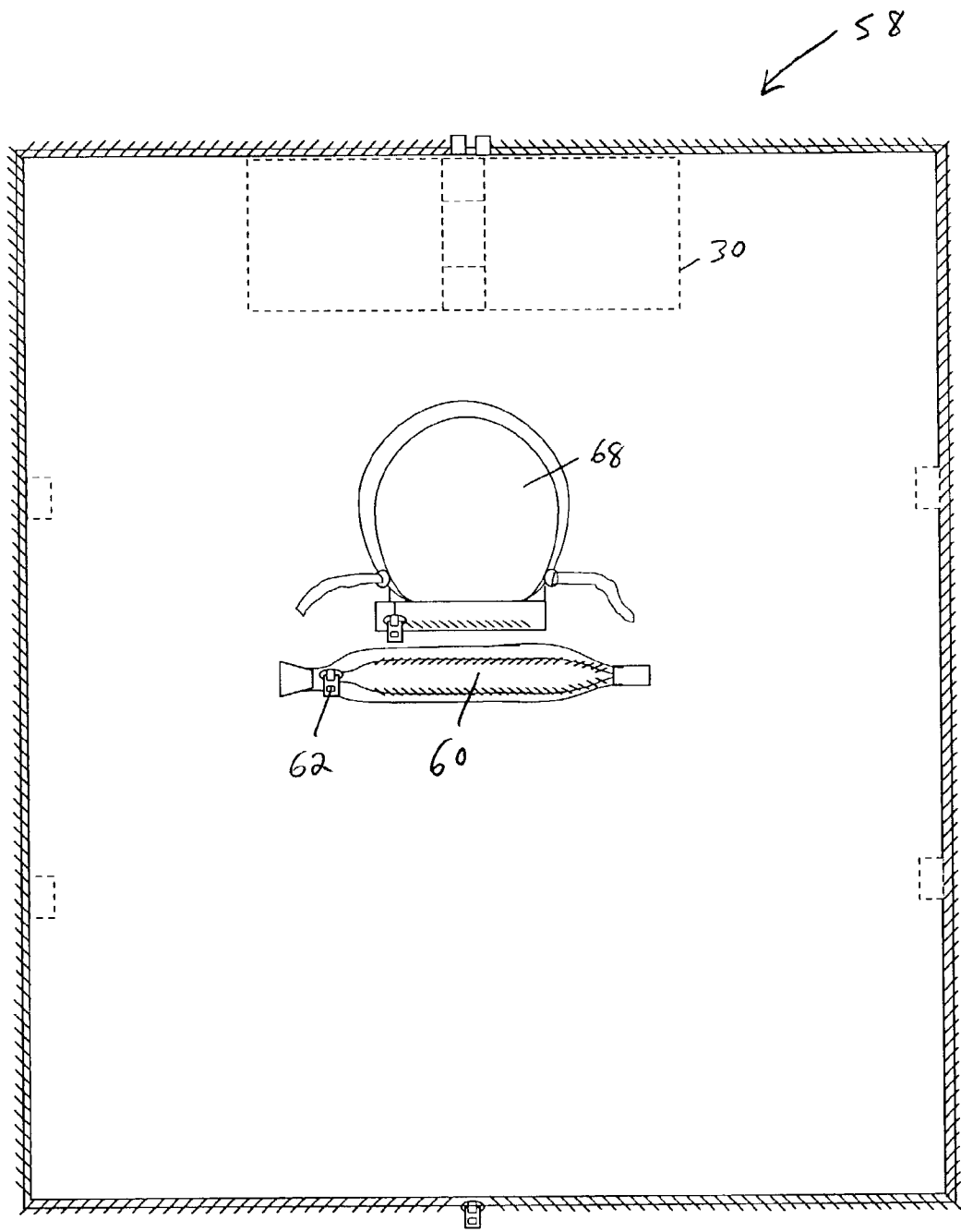


Fig. 4

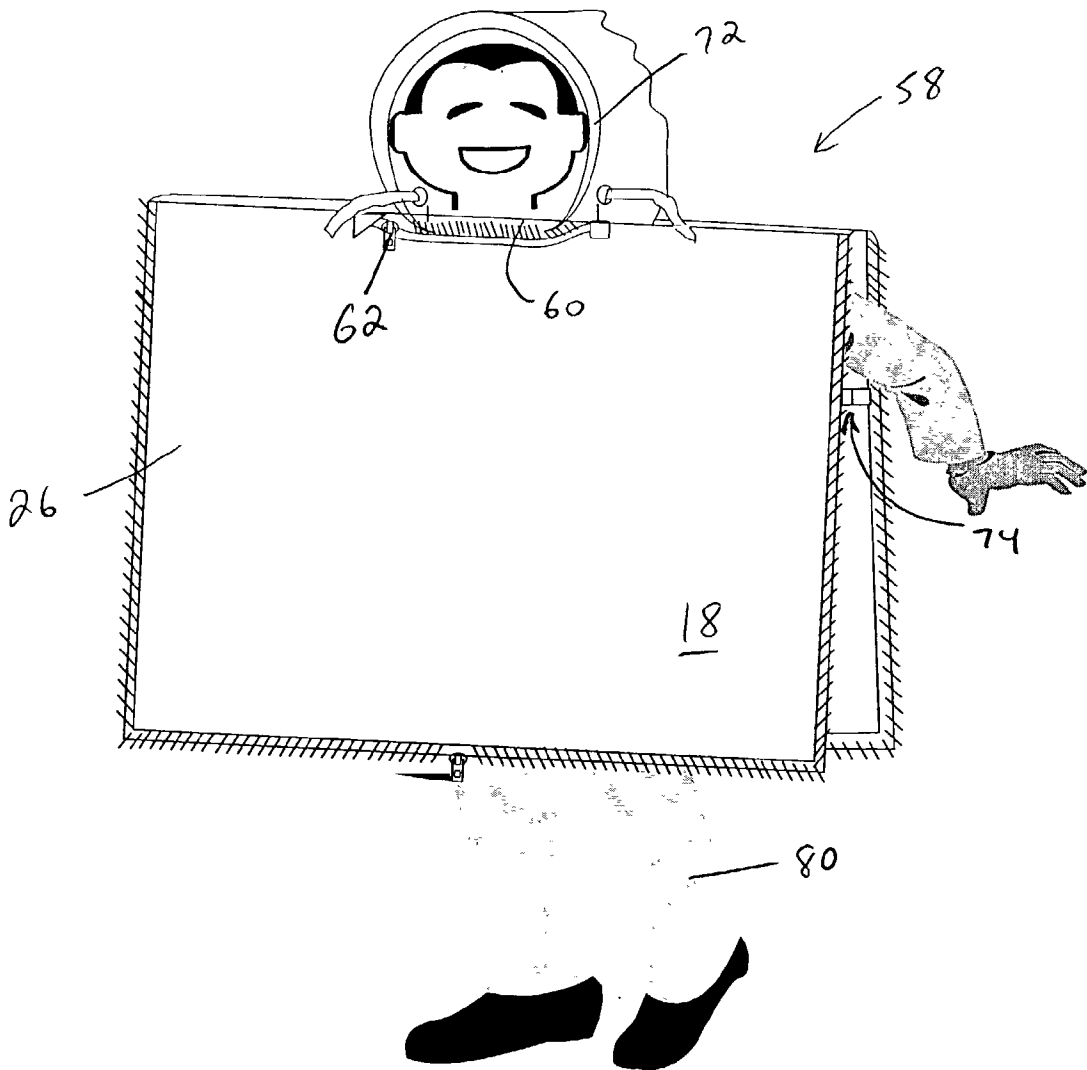


Fig. 5

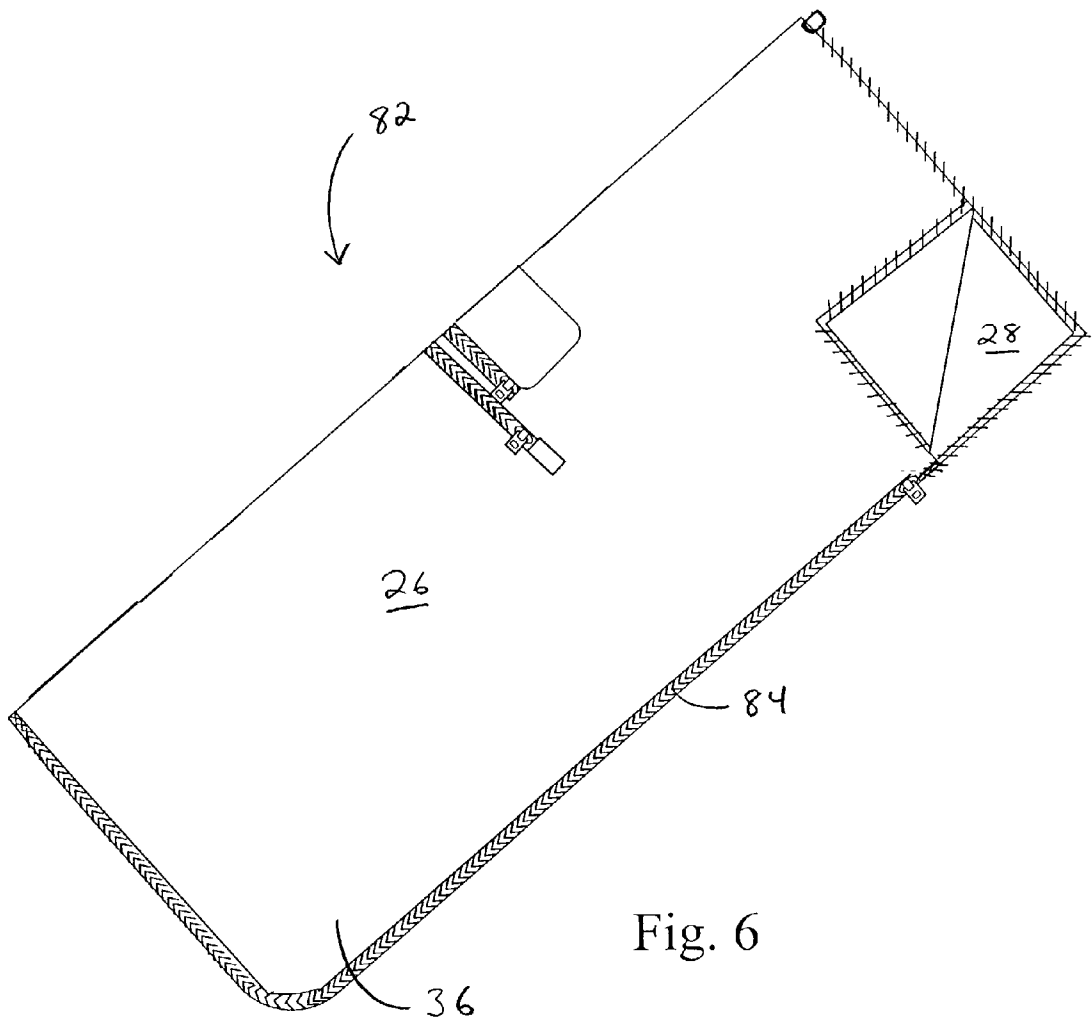


Fig. 6

## CONVERTIBLE CUSHION AND METHOD OF USING SAME

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] There are many leisure time activities that are conducted outdoors. Such leisure time activities include, for example, camping, hiking, fishing, attending sporting events, and so forth. As one would expect, those individuals participating in these leisure time activities would like to stay as physically comfortable as possible, even during inclement weather. As a result, individuals often carry additional gear, such as coats and umbrellas, in case the weather should become cold and/or rainy. Unfortunately, this additional gear is cumbersome and easily mislaid since the gear may not be carried with the individual on a regular basis.

[0002] In addition, an individual may place his or her coat and umbrella in the vehicle to transport them to the site of the leisure time activity. However, due to their cumbersome nature, the individual may then leave this additional gear in the vehicle where it is not readily accessible should the weather become unexpectedly inclement.

[0003] What is needed is a product that may be convertible into a blanket, parka, sleeping bag, cushion, and/or a floatation device.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Accordingly, one aspect of the present invention is to provide a product that may be used as a seat cushion and may be converted to a parka in the event of inclement weather.

[0005] Another aspect of the present invention is to provide a cushion convertible to a parka that is both moisture repellent and thermally insulated.

[0006] Yet another aspect of the present invention is to provide a product that may be used as a seat cushion and may be converted to a blanket in the event of inclement weather.

[0007] Another aspect of the present invention is to provide a cushion convertible to a blanket that is both moisture repellent and thermally insulated.

[0008] Yet another aspect of the present invention is to provide a product that may be used as a seat cushion and may be converted to a sleeping bag during camping or any other outdoor overnight event.

[0009] Another aspect of the present invention is to provide a cushion convertible to a sleeping bag that is both moisture repellent and thermally insulated.

[0010] In one embodiment according to the present invention, a convertible cushion comprises a flexible body having first and second surfaces bordered by a perimeter wherein the flexible body exhibits a longitudinal centerline that bisects the first surface; first releasable fastening means disposed on the flexible body for retaining the flexible body in a folded configuration; and second releasable fastening means disposed about at least a portion of the perimeter of the flexible body for retaining the flexible body in a sleeping configuration when the flexible body is folded along the

longitudinal centerline. Preferably, the first releasable fastening means is a zipper and the second releasable fastening means is a zipper.

[0011] In another embodiment, the cushion may also be converted into a parka. The flexible body in this embodiment further comprises an opening extending through the flexible body for admitting the head of an individual when in a parka configuration. The flexible body includes means for releasably sealing the opening. Preferably, the means for releasably sealing the opening is a zipper. The flexible body may further comprise a pocket disposed on the first surface proximate the opening in the flexible body wherein the pocket has a pocket opening, a hood coupled to the pocket; and means, coupled to each of the pocket and the first surface, for releasably sealing the pocket opening. In this configuration, the hood is stowed in the pocket when the cushion is in the folded configuration and the hood is removable from the pocket when the cushion is converted to the parka. Preferably, the means for releasably sealing the pocket opening is a zipper.

[0012] Still yet another aspect of the present invention is to provide a product that may be used as a floatation device for use in a pool, lake, ocean, or river whether in a folded or unfolded configuration.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] These and other features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with regard to the following description, appended claims, and accompanying drawings wherein like reference numbers refer to similar items throughout the Figures.

[0014] **FIG. 1** shows a perspective view depicting a cushion **10** convertible to a blanket, parka, and/or sleeping bag in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

[0015] **FIG. 2A** shows a top view of cushion **10** in an unfolded configuration for use as a blanket, table cloth, and/or floatation device;

[0016] **FIG. 2B** shows a bottom view of cushion **10** in an unfolded configuration for use as a blanket, table cloth, and/or floatation device;

[0017] **FIG. 3** shows a cross-sectional view along section A-A of **FIG. 2A**;

[0018] **FIG. 4** shows a top view of cushion **10** in an unfolded configuration and ready for use as a parka;

[0019] **FIG. 5** shows an illustration of cushion **10** converted into a parka and being worn by an individual; and

[0020] **FIG. 6** shows a perspective view of cushion **10** converted into a sleeping bag.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0021] Referring to **FIGS. 1-3**, **FIG. 1** shows a perspective view of a cushion convertible to a blanket, parka, sleeping bag, and/or floatation device (hereinafter referred to as cushion **10**) in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Cushion **10** may be employed as a plush seat cushion when arranged in a folded configuration



12. In addition, cushion 10 includes a handle 14 so that cushion 10 may be readily conveyed when in folded configuration 12.

[0022] FIG. 2A shows a top view of cushion 10 in a flat, or unfolded, configuration 16 and FIG. 2B shows a bottom view of cushion 10 in the same unfolded configuration 16. Cushion 10 may be employed as a blanket, table cloth, or ground cloth, when arranged in the flat or unfolded configuration 16. Cushion 10 comprises a flexible body 18 having three layers. Flexible body 18 exhibits a length L and a width W which is less than length L. Preferably, the length L of flexible body 18 when in unfolded configuration 16 is 82" and the width W of flexible body 18 when in unfolded configuration 16 is 54". Obviously, the length L and width W of flexible body 18 when in unfolded configuration may include different dimensions and still be within the scope of the present invention. The three layers comprise a thermal insulation layer 20 sandwiched in between a top moisture repellant layer 22 and a bottom moisture repellant layer as shown in FIG. 3. Top moisture repellant layer 22 has an outer surface defining a first outer surface 26 and bottom moisture repellant layer 24 has an outer surface defining a second outer surface 28 as illustrated in FIG. 3. Flexible body 18 includes a plurality of spaced-apart seams (not shown) that bond top moisture repellent layer 22, thermal insulation layer 20, and bottom moisture repellent layer 24 together. The coupling of top moisture repellent layer 22, thermal insulation layer 20, and bottom moisture repellent layer 24 through seams (not shown) serve to strengthen cushion 10 and prevent thermal insulation layer 20 from bunching up between top moisture repellent layer 22 and bottom moisture repellent layer 24. Optionally, flexible body 18 may comprise less than three layers of material or more than three layers of material and still be within the scope of the present invention.

[0023] In a preferred embodiment, top and bottom moisture repellent layers 22, 24 are formed from a nylon material wherein the first and second outer surfaces 26, 28 act as a moisture barrier between an individual sitting on cushion 10 in either of folded and unfolded configurations 14 and 16, respectively, and the ground beneath cushion 10. However, one skilled in the art would appreciate that any other moisture repellent material, such as polyester microfiber, may be used and still be within the scope of the present invention. Further, in a preferred embodiment, thermal insulation layer 20 is formed from a polyethylene foam material. Preferably, the polyethylene foam material is ELIOTEX™ distributed by RMF Global, Inc. (Pittsburgh, Pa). However, one skilled in the art would appreciate that any other thermally insulated material, such as polypropylene or olefin fibers, may be used and still be within the scope of the present invention.

[0024] To retain flexible body 18 in folded configuration 16 such that first outer surface 26 is concealed, a zipper 30 is disposed on second outer surface 28. Obviously, zipper 30 may be provided on first outer surface 26 so that second outer surface 28 is concealed. Zipper 30 is centered within flexible body 18 lying substantially along longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ . Zipper 30 includes a first interlocking track 32 and a second interlocking track 34. First interlocking track 32 is located on a first side 36, defined by longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ , of flexible body 18. First interlocking track 32 includes first, second, and third contiguous portions or

segments, 38, 40, and 42, respectively. First portion 38 and third portion 42 are oriented substantially perpendicular to longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ . Second portion 40 is oriented substantially parallel to and displaced a distance 44 from longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ .

[0025] Second interlocking track 34 is configured to mate with first interlocking track 32. Second interlocking track 34 is located on a second side 46, defined by longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ , of flexible body 18. Second interlocking track 34 includes fourth, fifth, and sixth contiguous portions or segments, 48, 50, and 52, respectively. Fourth portion 48 and sixth portion 52 are oriented substantially perpendicular to longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ . Third portion 50 is oriented substantially parallel to and displaced a distance 44 from longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ . When cushion 10 is arranged in folded configuration 12, and zipper 30 is engaged, first portion 38 interlocks with fourth portion 48, second portion 40 interlocks with fifth portion 50, and third portion 42 interlocks with sixth portion 52.

[0026] Although a zipper is employed in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, it should be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that other releasable fastening means for retaining flexible body 18 in folded configuration 12 may be employed. For example, Velcro snaps, hooks, and the like, may be used in place of zipper 30.

[0027] Handle 14 is disposed on first outer surface 26 along longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ . Handle 14 has a first handle end 54 coupled to first outer surface 26 proximate first and fourth portions 38 and 48, respectively, and a second handle end 56 coupled to first outer surface 26 proximate third and sixth portions 42 and 52, respectively. Accordingly, when cushion 10 is arranged in folded configuration 12 and zipper 30 is engaged, handle 14 remains exposed for easy conveyance of cushion 10.

[0028] FIG. 4 shows a top view of cushion 10 in a flat, or unfolded, configuration 16. As shown in FIG. 5, cushion 10 may be employed as a parka when arranged in parka configuration 58. Parka configuration 58 is similar to unfolded configuration 26, but includes features useful in converting flexible body 18 into a parka. To accomplish the task of converting cushion 10 into a parka, flexible body 18 includes a slotted opening 60 located near the center of flexible body 18 which extends through flexible body 18 for admitting the head of an individual. Slotted opening 60 is oriented substantially parallel to width W so that when cushion 10 is in parka configuration 58, the longer dimension, length L, of flexible body 18 is directed over the front and back of the individual's body, and the shorter dimension, width W, is directed toward the sides of the individual's body.

[0029] As shown in FIGS. 2 and 4, flexible body 18 further includes a zipper 62 for releasably sealing slotted opening 60. Zipper 62 is opened when cushion 10 is in parka configuration 58 to form opening 60. Zipper 62 may also be closed to seal opening 60 when cushion 10 is in unfolded configuration 16 so that cushion 10 may be effectively utilized as a blanket or ground cover without the presence of opening 60. Those skilled in the art will recognize that other means for releasably sealing opening 60 may be employed such as Velcro®, snaps, hooks, and so forth.

[0030] A pocket 64 is disposed on first outer surface 26 proximate opening 60 of flexible body 18. A pocket opening

66 is oriented substantially parallel to opening 60 of flexible body 18. A hood 68 is coupled to pocket 64, and a zipper 70 is coupled to each of pocket 64 and first outer surface 26 for sealing pocket opening 66. Of course, those skilled in the art will recognize that other means for releasably sealing pocket opening 66 may be employed such as Velcro®, snaps, hooks, and so forth.

[0031] Typically, hood 72 is stowed in pocket 64 when cushion 10 is in folded configuration 12 or unfolded configuration 16. However, when cushion 10 is in parka configuration 58, hood 72 may be removed from pocket 64 to be worn on the individual's head. In a preferred embodiment, pocket 64 and hood 72 are formed from water repellent nylon thus providing protection from rain and wind.

[0032] Second outer surface 28 of flexible body 18 may further include means for releasably fastening the edges of flexible body 18 to create arm openings when in parka configuration 58. As shown in FIG. 2B, the releasable attaching means are a pair of Velcro® patches, the first being a hook patch 76 and the second being a complimentary loop patch 78. Although Velcro® patches are employed in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, it should be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that other releasable attachment means may be employed. For example, snaps, hooks, zipper, and the like, may be used in place of Velcro® patches 74. Further, more than one pair of Velcro® patches 74 may be utilized along each edge of second outer surface 28 of flexible body 18.

[0033] FIG. 5 shows an illustration of cushion 10 converted into parka configuration 58 and being worn by an individual 80. As shown in FIG. 4, the head of individual 80 was inserted through opening 60 and hood 72 is being worn by individual 80. First outer surface 26 of moisture repellent layer 22 faces outward to provide a moisture barrier against rain and to provide resistance to the chilling effects of wind. Velcro® patches 74 are connected together to attach the edges of second outer surface 28 of flexible body 18 to prevent wind and rain from contacting the body of individual 80.

[0034] Cushion 10 may also be employed as a sleeping bag when oriented in sleeping bag configuration 82 as shown in FIG. 6. As shown in FIG. 2, to accomplish the task of converting cushion 10 into a sleeping bag, a zipper 84 is disposed about the entire perimeter of flexible body 18 for retaining flexible body 18 in sleeping bag configuration 82. Obviously, zipper 84 may be disposed about only a portion of the perimeter of flexible body 18, and not the entire perimeter. Zipper 84 permits flexible body 18 to be folded in half along longitudinal centerline  $C_L$  such that first outer surface 26 is exposed and second outer surface 28 is concealed. Optionally, zipper 84 may be folded in half along longitudinal centerline  $C_L$  such that second outer surface 28 is exposed and first outer surface 26 is concealed. Zipper 84 includes a first interlocking track 86 and a second interlocking track 88. First interlocking track 86 is located on first side 36 of flexible body 18. First interlocking track 86 includes first and second contiguous portions or segments, 90, and 92, respectively. First portion 90 is oriented substantially perpendicular to longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ . Second portion 92 is oriented substantially parallel to longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ .

[0035] Second interlocking track 88 is configured to mate with first interlocking track 86. Second interlocking track 88 is located on second side 46 of flexible body 18. Second interlocking track 88 includes third and fourth contiguous portions or segments, 96 and 98, respectively. Third portion 96 is oriented substantially perpendicular to longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ . Fourth portion 50 is oriented substantially parallel to longitudinal centerline  $C_L$ . When cushion 10 is arranged in sleeping bag configuration 82, and zipper 84 is engaged, first portion 90 interlocks with third portion 96 and second portion 92 interlocks with fifth portion 98.

[0036] Cushion 10 may also be employed as a floatation device when arranged in folded configuration 12 as shown in FIG. 1, unfolded configuration 16 as shown in FIG. 2, or sleeping bag configuration 82 as shown in FIG. 6. Accordingly, cushion 10 may be utilized as a raft or other floating device. To accomplish the task of utilizing cushion 10 as a floatation device, thermal insulation layer 20 preferably comprises a material having floatation properties. Preferably, the thermal insulation material is ELIOTEX™ distributed by RMF Global, Inc. (Pittsburgh, Pa.) that is a polyethylene foam material that has thermal insulation properties as well as floatation properties. Thus, when this material is provided as a thermal insulation layer, cushion 10 may be also utilized as a floatation device.

[0037] Although a zipper is employed in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, it should be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that other releasable fastening means for retaining flexible body 18 in sleeping bag configuration 82 may be employed. For example, Velcro®, snaps, hooks, and the like, may be used in place of zipper 84.

[0038] In summary, the present invention provides for a cushion convertible to a blanket, ground cover, parka, sleeping bag, and/or floatation device. This compact cushion is readily stowed in a vehicle, so as to be available in the event of an emergency situation. When the cushion is in a folded configuration, a handle allows the cushion to be easily conveyed to leisure time activities, such as into stadiums or camping, so that the cushion may be used as a seat cushion until it is needed as a blanket, parka, sleeping bag, or floatation device.

[0039] Although the preferred embodiments of the invention have been illustrated and described in detail, it will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications may be made therein without departing from the spirit of the invention or from the scope of the appended claims. For example, the flexible body may be formed from different softgoods depending upon the particular planned use for the cushion

What is claimed is:

1. A convertible cushion comprising:

a flexible body having first and second surfaces bordered by a perimeter, said flexible body exhibiting a longitudinal centerline that bisects said flexible body into a first side and a second side;

first releasable fastening means disposed on said flexible body for retaining said flexible body in a folded configuration; and

- second releasable fastening means disposed about at least a portion of said perimeter of said flexible body for retaining said flexible body in a sleeping configuration when said flexible body is folded along said longitudinal centerline.
2. The convertible cushion of claim 1, wherein said first releasable fastening means comprises a zipper.
3. The convertible cushion of claim 2, wherein said first zipper includes a first interlocking track disposed on said first side of said second surface and a second interlocking track disposed on said second side of said second surface, said first interlocking track having first, second, and third contiguous portions wherein said first and third contiguous portions are oriented substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal centerline and said second contiguous portion is oriented substantially parallel to and displaced a first distance from said longitudinal centerline between said first and third contiguous portions,
- said second interlocking track having fourth, fifth, and sixth contiguous portions wherein said fourth and sixth contiguous portions are oriented substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal centerline and said fifth contiguous portion is oriented substantially parallel to and displaced said first distance from said longitudinal centerline between said fourth and sixth contiguous portions; and
- such that when said first zipper is engaged, said first contiguous portion interlocks with said third contiguous portion, said second contiguous portion interlocks with said fifth contiguous portion, and said third contiguous portion interlocks with said sixth contiguous portion.
4. The convertible cushion of claim 1, wherein said second releasable fastening means comprises a zipper.
5. The convertible cushion of claim 4, wherein said second zipper includes a third interlocking track disposed on said first side of flexible body and a fourth interlocking track disposed on said second side of flexible body,
- said third interlocking track having first and second contiguous portions wherein said first contiguous portion is oriented substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal centerline and said second contiguous portion is oriented substantially parallel to said longitudinal centerline,
- said fourth interlocking track having third and fourth contiguous portions wherein said third contiguous portion is oriented substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal centerline and said fourth contiguous portion is oriented substantially parallel to said longitudinal centerline,
- such that when said second zipper is engaged, said first contiguous portion interlocks with said third contiguous portion and said second contiguous portion interlocks with said fourth contiguous portion.
6. The convertible cushion of claim 1, wherein said flexible body further comprises an opening extending through said flexible body for admitting the head of said individual when in a parka configuration.
7. The convertible cushion of claim 6, further comprising means for releasably sealing said opening.
8. The convertible cushion of claim 7, further comprising:
- a pocket disposed on said first surface proximate said opening in said flexible body, said pocket having a pocket opening;
- a hood coupled to said pocket; and
- means, coupled to each of said pocket and said first surface, for releasably sealing said pocket opening, wherein said hood is stowed in said pocket when said cushion is in said folded configuration, and said hood is removable from said pocket when said cushion is converted to said parka.
9. The convertible cushion of claim 1, wherein said flexible body comprises an insulation layer interposed between first and second moisture repellant layers.
10. The convertible cushion of claim 9, wherein said insulation layer comprises a polyethylene foam material.
11. A convertible cushion comprising:
- a flexible body having first and second surfaces bordered by a perimeter when in an unfolded configuration, said flexible body exhibiting a longitudinal centerline that bisects said first surface into a first side and a second side;
- a first zipper disposed on said second surface for retaining said flexible body when in a folded configuration which defines said cushion, said first zipper including a first interlocking track disposed on said first side on said second surface and a second interlocking track disposed on said second side on said second surface;
- said first interlocking track having first, second, and third contiguous portions wherein said first and third contiguous portions are oriented substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal centerline and said second contiguous portion is oriented substantially parallel to and displaced a first distance from said longitudinal centerline between said first and third contiguous portions;
- said second interlocking track having fourth, fifth, and sixth contiguous portions wherein said fourth and sixth contiguous portions are oriented substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal centerline and said fifth contiguous portion is oriented substantially parallel to and displaced said first distance from said longitudinal centerline between said fourth and sixth contiguous portions; and
- such that when said first zipper is engaged, said first contiguous portion interlocks with said third contiguous portion, said second contiguous portion interlocks with said fifth contiguous portion, and said third contiguous portion interlocks with said sixth contiguous portion;
- a second zipper disposed about at least a portion of said perimeter of said flexible body for retaining said flexible body when said flexible body is folded along said longitudinal centerline to define a sleeping configuration, said second zipper including a third interlocking track disposed on said first side of flexible body and a fourth interlocking track disposed on said second side of flexible body;

said third interlocking track having first and second contiguous portions wherein said first contiguous portion is oriented substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal centerline and said second contiguous portion is oriented substantially parallel to and displaced a second distance from said longitudinal centerline;

said fourth interlocking track having third and fourth contiguous portions wherein said third contiguous portion is oriented substantially perpendicular to said longitudinal centerline and said fourth contiguous portion is oriented substantially parallel to and displaced said second distance from said longitudinal centerline;

such that when said second zipper is engaged, said first contiguous portion interlocks with said third contiguous portion and said second contiguous portion interlocks with said fourth contiguous portion.

**12.** The convertible cushion of claim 11, wherein said flexible body comprises an insulation layer interposed between first and second moisture repellant layers.

**13.** The convertible cushion of claim 12, wherein said insulation layer comprises a polyethylene foam material.

**14.** The convertible cushion of claim 13, wherein said polyethylene foam material exhibits floatation properties thereby permitting an individual to use said cushion as a flotation device.

**15.** The convertible cushion of claim 12, wherein said first and second moisture repellant layers comprise a nylon material.

**16.** The convertible cushion of claim 11, wherein said flexible body further comprises an opening extending

through said flexible body for admitting the head of said individual when in a parka configuration.

**17.** The convertible cushion of claim 16, wherein said flexible body exhibits a length and a width, said length being greater than said width, and said opening is a slot oriented substantially parallel to said width.

**18.** The convertible cushion of claim 16, further comprising means for releasably sealing said opening.

**19.** The convertible cushion of claim 16, further comprising:

a pocket disposed on said first surface proximate said opening in said flexible body, said pocket having a pocket opening;

a hood coupled to said pocket; and

means, coupled to each of said pocket and said first surface, for releasably sealing said pocket opening, wherein said hood is stowed in said pocket when said cushion is in said folded configuration, and said hood is removable from said pocket when said cushion is converted to said parka.

**20.** The convertible cushion of claim 19, wherein said pocket and said hood are formed from a moisture repellent material.

**21.** The convertible cushion of claim 11, wherein said cushion further comprises a handle disposed on said second surface.

**22.** The convertible cushion of claim 2, further comprising fastening means disposed on said second surface to create arm openings when said flexible body is in said parka configuration.

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