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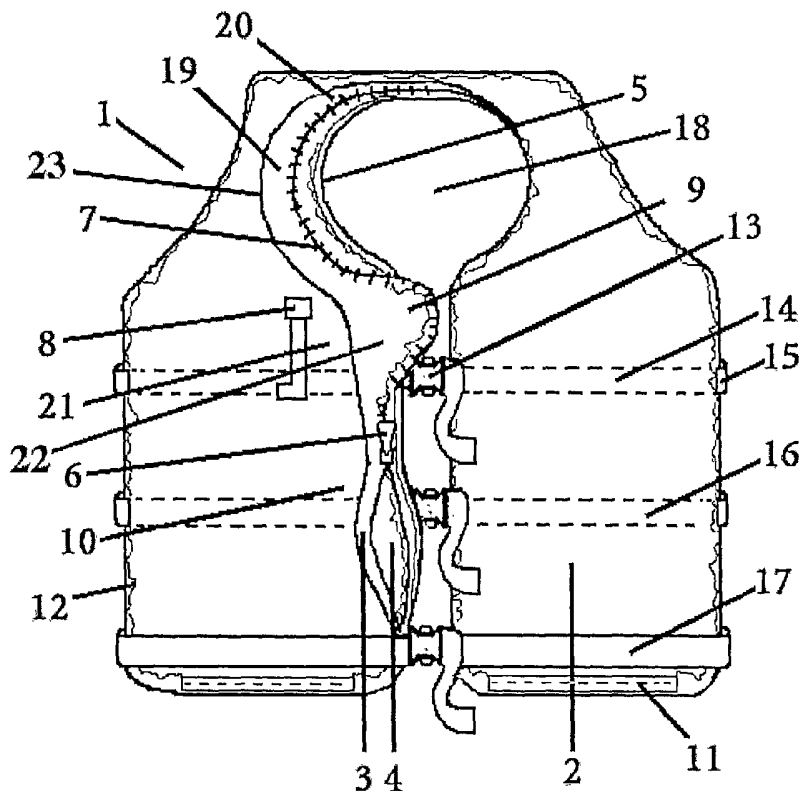
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: VARIABLE DISPLACEMENT, EXTERNAL FABRIC COVER AND GUSSET-CONFIGURED, HYBRID LIFE JACKET WITH RELEASEABLE OR NONRELEASEABLE BLADDER



(57) Abstract: A type III personal flotation device (PFD) (1) is provided modified to include a midline external-fabric gusset-configured hybrid bladder to allow functional conversion into a life jacket. Lengthwise mechanical closure (7) allows the width of the midline gusset to be adjusted to provide the appropriate amount of inflatable hybrid as dictated by the season, demands or amount of clothing. A two layer midline gusset is patterned to provide four distinct improvements in function; cephalic support for improved freeboard, lateral cervical bladders to limit side to side swing of the head and neck, midline closure and mandibular splint to prevent anterior swings and sufficient thoracic bladder to supply corrective turning. Paddlers Type III also includes an axillary gusset to reduce PFD ride up. Configuring gusset release means tailored to the means of inflation and intended water activity is also provided.

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— *before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments*

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US03/21090

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : B63C 9/08
 US CL : 441/116

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 U.S. : 441/88, 106, 114-119

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category * | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|------------|--|-----------------------|
| Y | WO 00/51454 (KERR) 08 September 2000 (08.09.2000), figures 1-3. | 1 |
| Y | US 6,298,487 B1 (MAYHEW) 09 October 2001 (09.10.2001), figures 3, 8, and 9. | 1 |
| Y | US 5,911,612 A (STEGER) 15 June 1999 (15.06.1999), figures 1, 2, and 8-10. | 1, 2, 5-10 |
| Y | US 5,338,239 A (CLEAVELAND) 16 August 1994 (16.08.1994), column 3, line 23; column 5, lines 5-13 and 42-47. | 8-11 |
| Y | US 4,498,882 A (EVERT) 12 February 1985 (12.02.1985), column 5, lines 16-26 and 58-62; column 6 lines 16-37. | 1, 5-10 |
| Y | US 4,097,947 A (KIEFER) 04 July 1978 (04.07.1978), figures 3-6 | 1, 3 |
| Y | US 3,931,657 A (JONES) 13 January 1976 (13.01.1976), figures 1-5. | 1, 3 |
| Y | US 3,761,982 A (HAWKINS) 02 October 1973 (02.10.1973), figures 1-6. | 1, 5-7 |

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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Continuation of Item 4 of the first sheet:

The title is too long.

NEW TITLE: GUSSET-CONFIGURED HYBRID LIFE JACKET