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(54) **LIFE JACKET WITH INTEGRATED SLEEVES**

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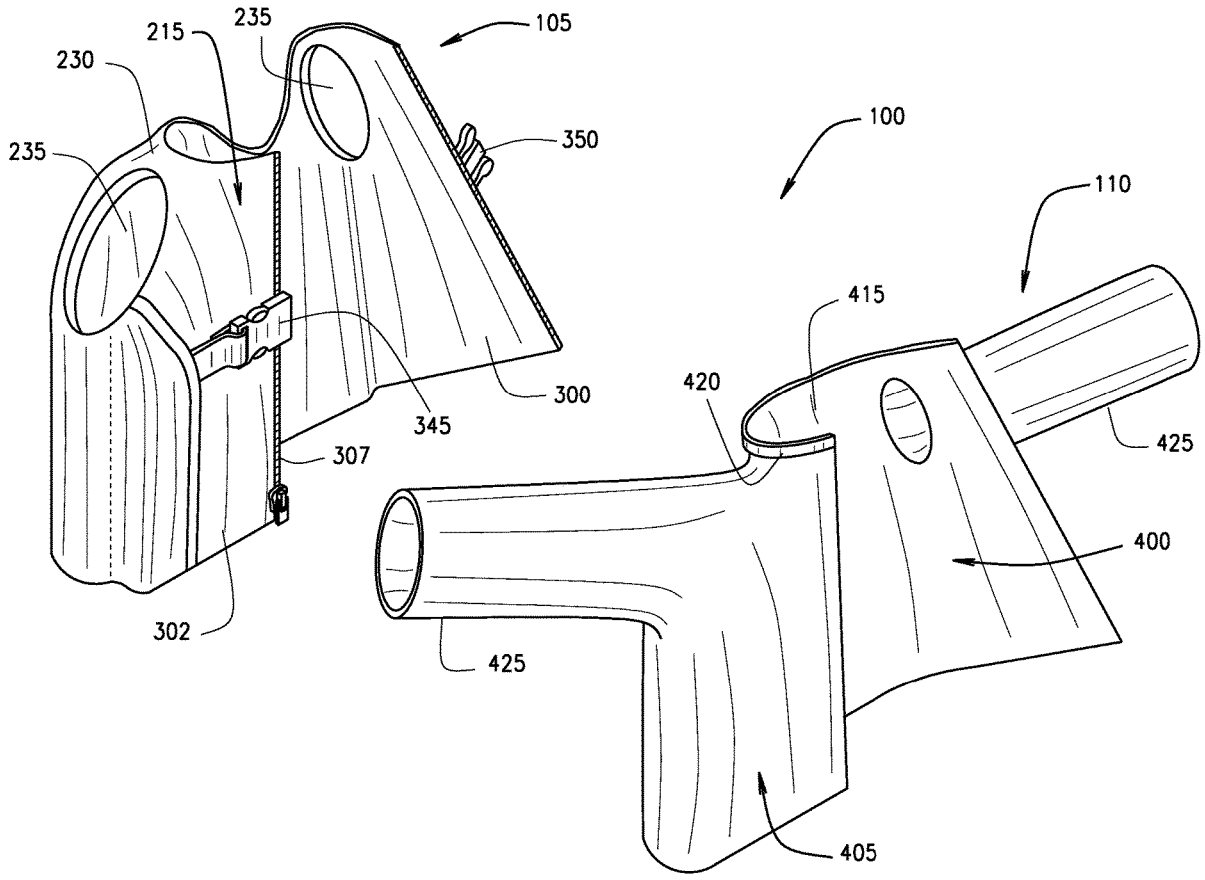
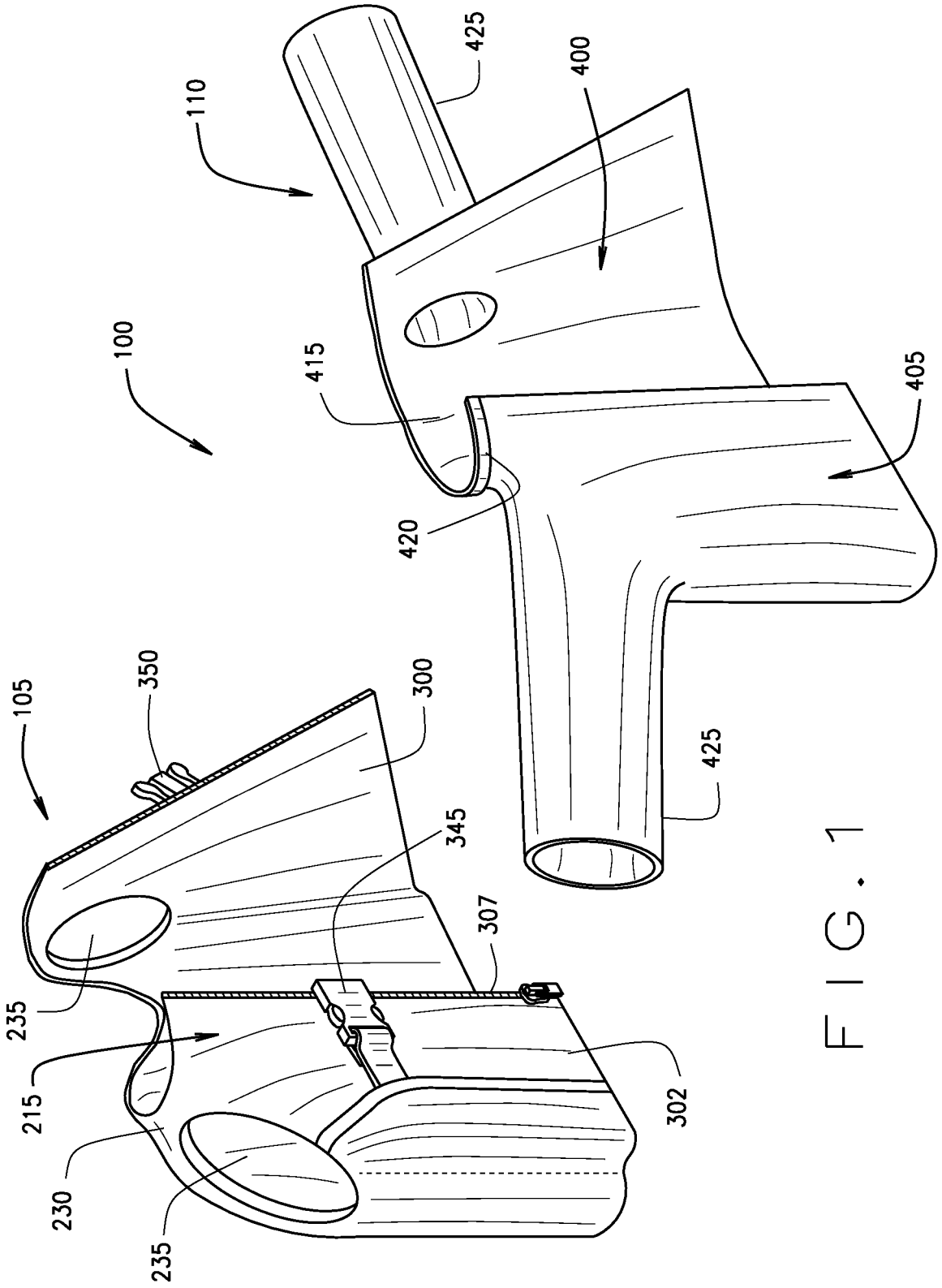
CPC *B63C 9/115* (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A life jacket vest including a life jacket member having a pair of arm openings and a lining having a pair of sleeve members and a perimeter. The lining is positioned in mating relationship with at least a portion of the life jacket member and is attached along at least a portion of the perimeter of the life jacket member. The sleeve members are received and extend through the openings of the life jacket member and are not attached to the life jacket member. The life jacket member may include a fastener member and a size adjustment member. The lining may include a neck portion and a collar portion. By attaching the lining to the life jacket member in places other than the arm openings, the present life jacket vest allows for a greater range of motion and less constraints in the arm openings of the life jacket member.




100
105
110
215
230
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345
350
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415
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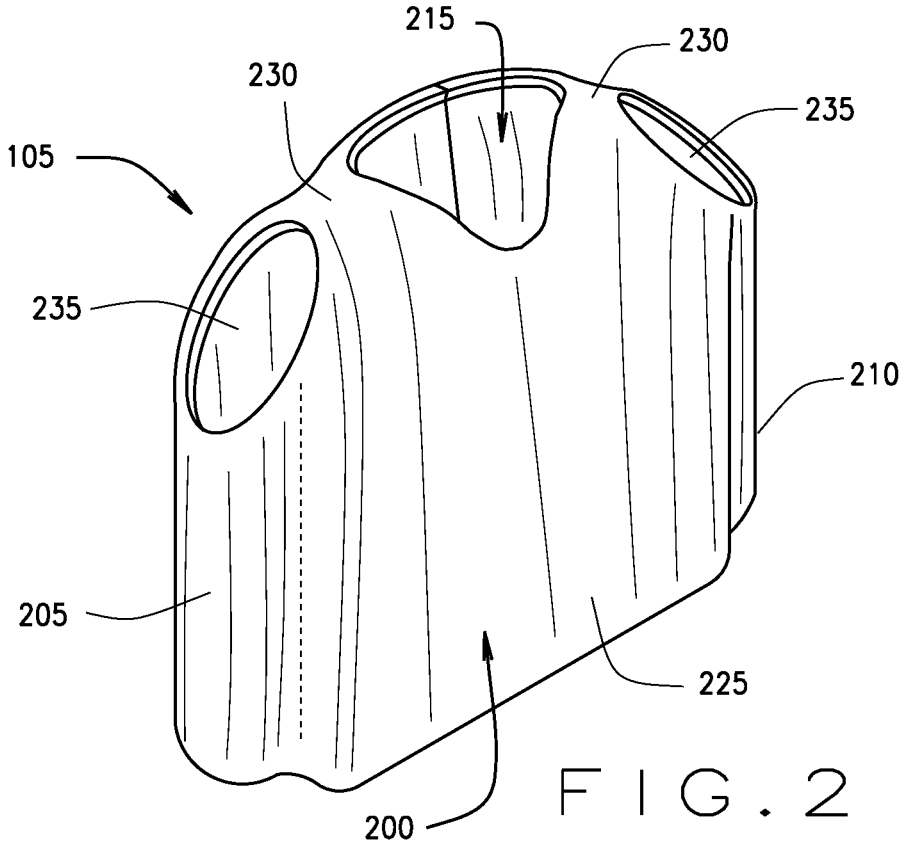
425
425

FIG. 1


215
230
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210
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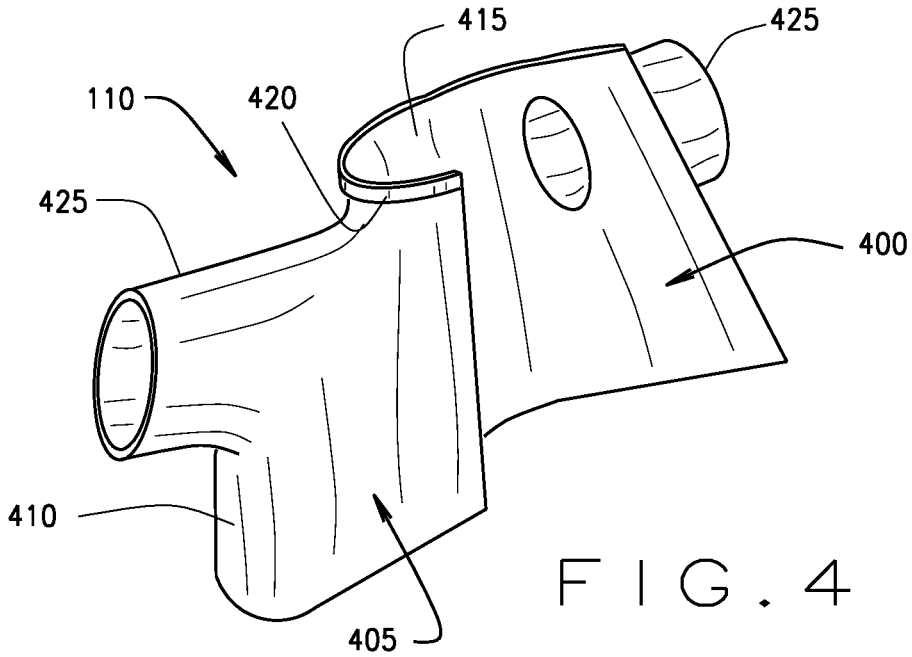
225
200

FIG. 2


415
425
110
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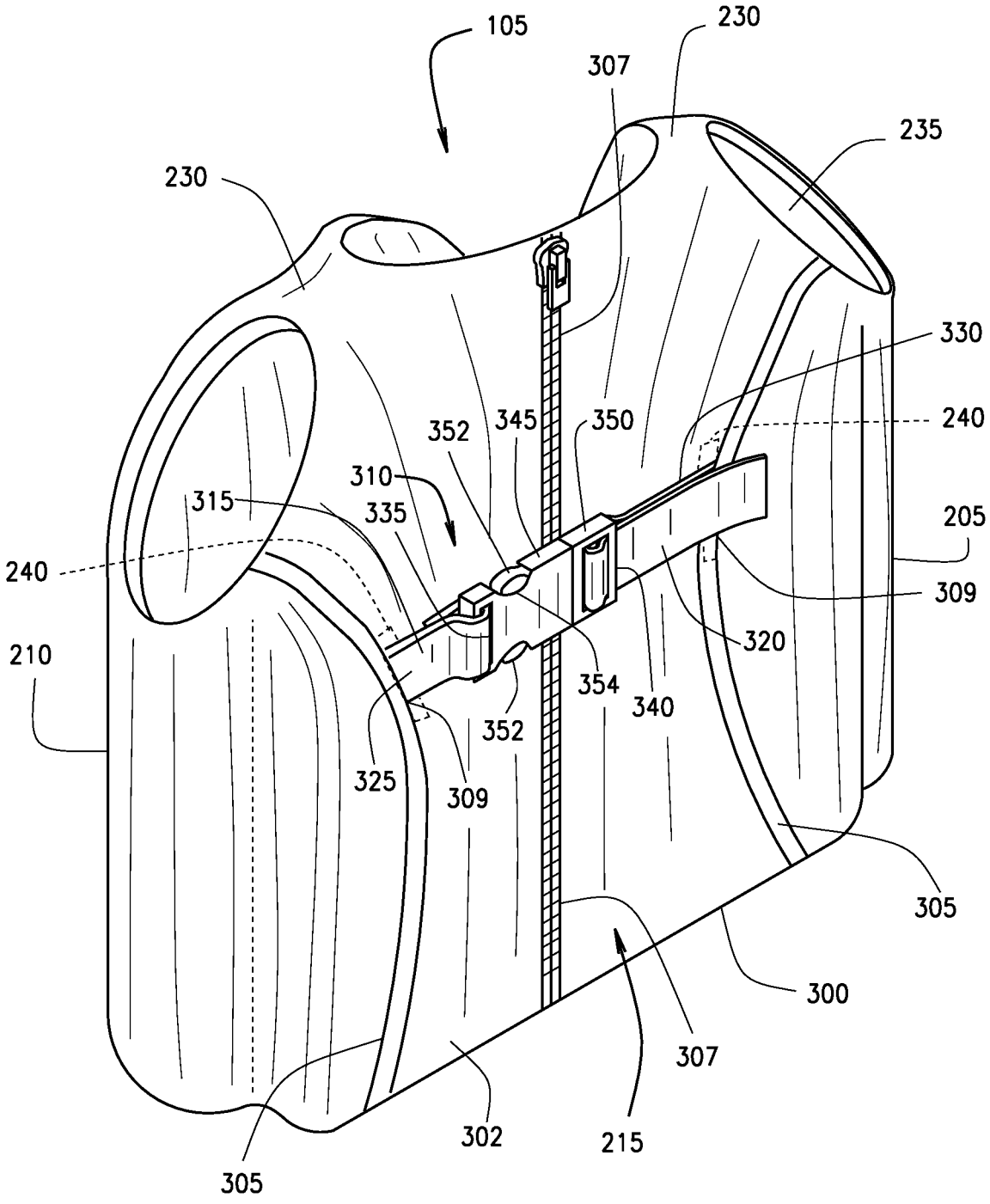
400
410
405

FIG. 4


105
230
307
235
230
330
240
352
345
350
310
315
335
205
240
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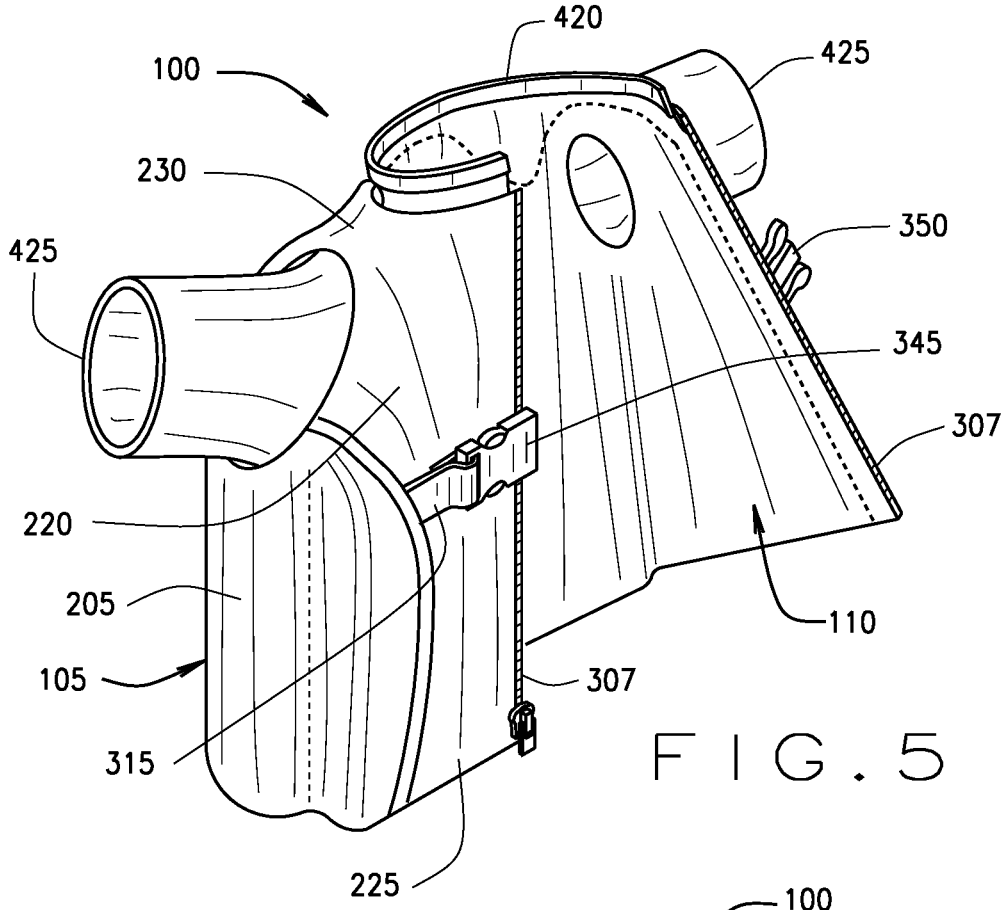
210
354
340
352
325
309
305
300
307
302
215
305

FIG. 3


420
100
425
230
350
425
345
307
220
205
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105
307
315
225

FIG. 5

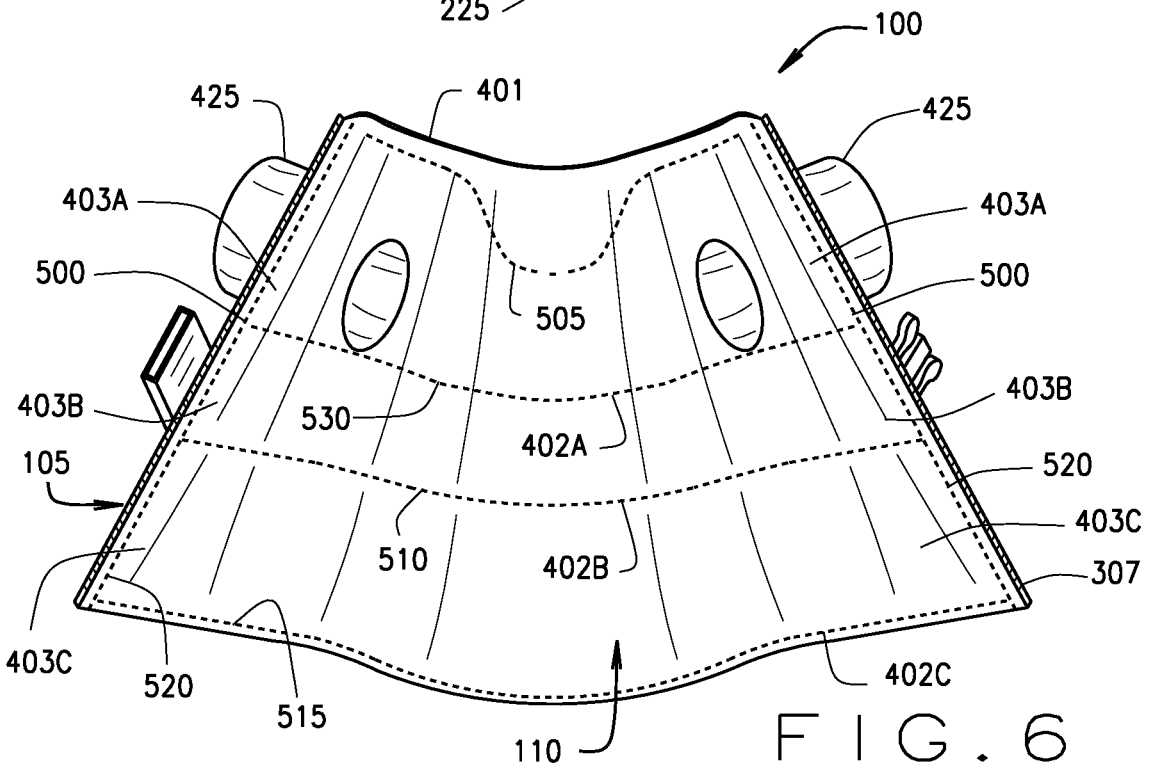
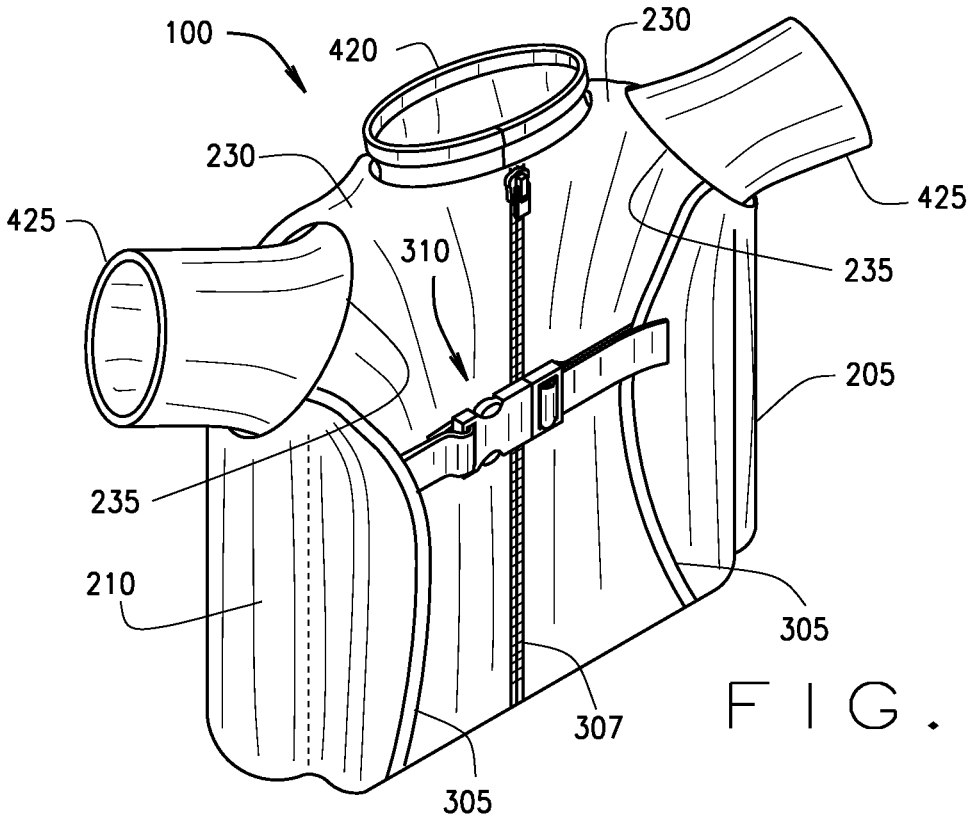

100
425
401
425
403A
403A
500
500
505
403B
403B
530
402A
105
520
403C
510
402B
307
403C
520
515
402C
110

FIG. 6


100
420
230
230
425
425
310
235
205
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210
305
307
305

FIG. 7

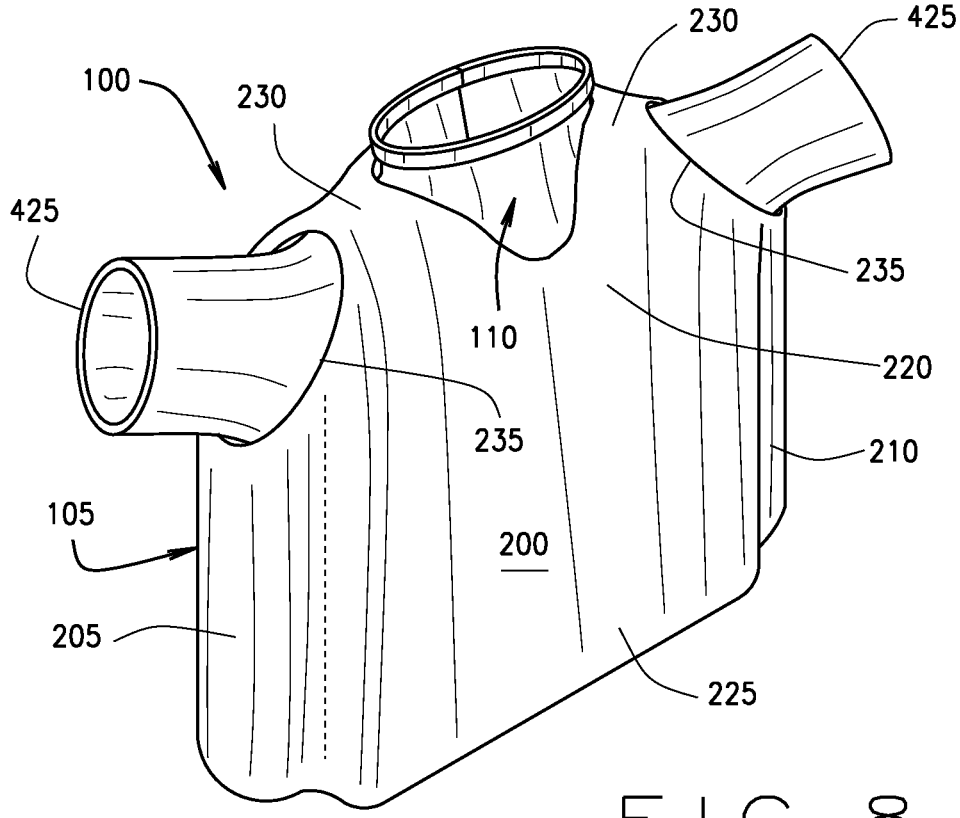
230
425
100
230
425
235
110
220
235
210
105
200
205
225

FIG. 8

LIFE JACKET WITH INTEGRATED SLEEVES

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 62/530,987 filed Jul. 11, 2017, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to a life jacket vest and, more specifically, to a life jacket vest with integrated sleeves and optional neck.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Millions of children partake in water activities each year, and are kept safe through a variety of flotation devices. Some of the most common flotation devices are arm bands and life jackets. However both of these flotation devices have their disadvantages. Life jackets offer better protection and are able to keep a child's head out of the water, but children may not like wearing life jackets because they are uncomfortable. Arm bands, on the other hand, do not offer the same type of protection as life jackets. Instead, arm bands serve more as a support or an instructional aid while a child is learning how to swim. If a child is injured or incapacitated, arm bands will not keep a child's head out of the water. Additionally, children can easily remove the arm bands themselves.

[0004] While life jackets and arm bands enable flotation, neither life jackets nor arm bands offer sun protection, particularly to the arms and neck of the wearer. Clothing, such as rash guards, does offer sun protection, but cannot serve as a flotation device. Efforts have been made to create a device that offers both flotation and protection against the sun by attaching sleeves to a life jacket. However, simply attaching sleeves to a life jacket results in a very uncomfortable rash guard shirt or a very restrictive life jacket.

[0005] It is therefore desirable to create a flotation device that does not restrict arm or neck movement, protects against the sun, and keeps an incapacitated child's head out of the water.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The present invention described herein is a life jacket vest with an integrated neck and sleeves, wherein the life jacket vest allows for greater mobility in the arm area and provides protection from the sun. The present life jacket vest includes both a life jacket member and a lining. The life jacket member is a life jacket as known and understood in the art. While the lining has a front, rear, sides, sleeve members, and a neck portion, the lining may differ according to the preferences of the consumer. For example, the lining may or may not have a neck portion, with or without a collar. The lining may also be fabricated in various lengths and include sleeve members of varying lengths as well.

[0007] The sleeves members of the present lining are inserted and extend through the arm apertures of the life jacket member. The sleeves members are not attached to the life jacket member. Instead, in one embodiment, the lining is attached to the life jacket member along at least a portion of its perimeter, such as along or adjacent to a fastener member. This secures the life jacket member to the lining. The lining may be attached to the life jacket member in other places, such as at the neck, along side portions or around other perimeter locations of the life jacket member. The lining, attached to the life jacket member in places other than the arm apertures, allows for a greater range of motion and less constraints in the arm openings. The lining is also preferably made of ultraviolet-blocking fabric. The present life jacket vest with integrated sleeves and a neck is therefore a comfortable flotation device that also offers protection from the sun.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] For a better understanding of the various embodiments of the present invention, reference may be made to the accompanying drawings in which:

[0009] FIG. **1** is an exploded perspective view of a life jacket vest with integrated neck and sleeves constructed in accordance with the teachings of one embodiment of the present invention in its open state;

[0010] FIG. **2** is a perspective front view of the life jacket member of FIG. **1** in its closed state;

[0011] FIG. **3** is a perspective rear view of the life jacket member of FIGS. **1** and **2** in its closed state;

[0012] FIG. **4** is a perspective rear view of the lining of the life jacket vest of FIG. **1** in its open state;

[0013] FIG. **5** is a perspective rear view of the assembled life jacket vest of FIG. **1** in its open state;

[0014] FIG. **6** is a perspective rear view of the life jacket vest of FIGS. **1** and **5** in its open state;

[0015] FIG. **7** is a perspective rear view of the life jacket vest of FIGS. **1**, **5** and **6** in its closed state; and

[0016] FIG. **8** is a perspective front view of the life jacket vest of FIGS. **1** and **7** in its closed state.

[0017] While the disclosure is susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments thereof are shown by way of example in the drawings and will herein be described in detail. It should be understood, however, that the drawings and detailed description presented herein are not intended to limit the disclosure to the particular embodiments disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0018] The present invention will now be described with reference to the drawing figures in which like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout this disclosure. For purposes of clarity in illustrating the characteristics of the present invention, proportional relationships of the elements have not necessarily been maintained in the drawing figures.

[0019] As illustrated in FIG. **1**, a life jacket vest with integrated neck and sleeves **100** includes a life jacket member **105** and a lining **110** which will be described in more detail below. As been illustrated in FIG. **2**, life jacket member **105** is a typical life jacket vest as known and understood in the art. Life jacket member **105** includes a front section **200**, two side sections **205** and **210**, and a rear section **215**. Front section **200** includes an upper front portion **220** and a lower front portion **225**. Front section **200** and rear section **215** are located opposite from one another,

while opposed side sections **205** and **210** are located adjacent to both front section **200** and rear section **215**. Strap portions **230** are located and positioned above the upper front portion **220** of the front section **200** of life jacket member **105** and extend from upper front section **220** to the rear section **215** as illustrated in FIGS. **2** and **3**. Life jacket member **105** further includes a pair of arm apertures or openings **235** located approximately adjacent strap portions **230**, adjacent and above upper front portion **220** of front section **200**, and adjacent and above side sections **205** and **210**. Arm apertures **235** are substantially oval in shape and are constructed to receive the arms of a wearer such that the arm of a wearer can extend through each arm aperture **235** and freely rotate and move therewithin. It is recognized and anticipated that the arm apertures **235** may be positioned and located in other areas of life jacket member **105** relative to strap portions **230** and upper front portion **220** depending upon the size of the wearer.

[0020] At least front section **200** and rear section **215** include a material that is less dense than water, a buoyant material, thereby enabling a wearer that dons the life jacket member **105** to float. In one embodiment, the buoyant material may reside in the interior portion or space associated with the front and rear sections **200** and **215**. In an alternative embodiment, the entire front and rear sections may be made of a buoyant material. The straps portions **230** and side sections **205** and **210** can likewise include buoyant material. This material may be ethylene vinyl acetate, closed-cell foam, or foamed plastics, such as polyvinyl chloride and polyethylene. Other materials enabling buoyancy are envisioned and foreseeable. Life jacket member **105** preferably includes a nylon or polyester outer covering although other fabrics and materials are also envisioned.

[0021] As shown in FIG. **3**, one embodiment of the present life jacket member **105** shows the rear section **215** split in half vertically into right rear side **300** and left rear side **302**. In alternative embodiments, the rear section **215** may not be split in half. Instead, the vertical split may be located in front section **200**, or along side sections **205** or **210**, or at other locations.

[0022] Referring again to FIG. **3**, right rear side **300** and left rear side **302** may each include a reinforcement member **305** that each runs from an arm aperture **235** to the bottom of the life jacket member **105**. Reinforcement members **305** may include extra fabric material sewn to the rear section **215** or any other reinforcement type member to give strength and rigidity to the overall vest. Reinforcement members **305** may also curve inwardly, creating a slight arch as shown in FIG. **3**. It is recognized and anticipated that reinforcement member **305** is not required and is merely an optional feature. The present life jacket member **105** can be fabricated without any type of reinforcement member.

[0023] Right rear side **300** and left rear side **302** of life jacket member **105** may likewise selectively engage each other through fastener member **307** thereby closing and securing the life jacket member around the wearer. Fastener member **307** may extend the full length of rear section **215**, or it may extend only partially along the full length of rear section **215**. In one embodiment, fastener member **307** is a zipper, although other fastener members such as Velcro® fasteners, buckles, buttons, ties, and still other methods and means of securing life jacket member **105** to the user are envisioned and foreseeable. Fastener member **307** may also include multiple methods and means of securing life jacket member **105** to the user. It is also recognized and anticipated that fastener member **307** may be positioned and located at other locations on life jacket member **105**, including being re-located to front section **200** or to one of the side sections **205** or **210**.

[0024] Life jacket member **105** may be further closed and secured to the wearer through the use of size adjustment member **310**. In one embodiment, size adjustment member **310** is a strap or a long narrow piece of fabric which is located approximately between the upper and lower front portions **220** and **225** of the vest and runs horizontally around the entire life jacket member **105** and fastens or secures in the rear of the life jacket member **105** as illustrated in FIG. **3**. In this regard, size adjustment member **310** may be embedded in the interior portion of front, side and rear sections **200**, **205**, **210** and **215** and may lie in-between the buoyant material and the fabric associated with the front section **200**, side sections **205** and **210**, and part of rear section **215**. Size adjustment member **310** includes a first end portion **315** and a second end portion **320**. First end portion **315** and second end portion **320** each further has a distal end **325** and **330** respectively, and a proximal end **335** and **340** respectively, both of which emerge from in-between the buoyant material and fabric of the life jacket member **105** at reinforcement member **305** on both the right rear side **300** and the left rear side **302** of the life jacket member **105**. Although reinforcement members **305** may be permanently attached or otherwise fixed to life jacket member **305**, size adjustment member **310** is not permanently attached. Instead, in one embodiment, reinforcement members **305**, if they are used, are sewn onto life jacket member **105** such that a gap **309** exists in the seam attaching each reinforcement member **305** to life jacket member **105** where each distal end **325** and **330** of the size adjustment member **310** emerges from in-between the fabric and buoyant material.

[0025] The size adjustment member **310** can therefore be pulled back and forth around the life jacket member **105** without being impeded by reinforcement members **305**. This is likewise true if reinforcement member **305** is not used.

[0026] The proximal ends **335** and **340** of first end portion **315** and second end portion **320** of the size adjustment member **310** are further attached to female receiver member **345** and male fastener member **350**, respectively. Fastening members **345** and **350** are conventional type cooperatively engaging fasteners well known in the prior art. In operation, force is typically applied to the prongs **352** of the male fastener member **350** so that the prongs are inwardly depressed. The male fastener member **350** may then be inserted into the female receiver member **345**. Once pressure is no longer applied to the prongs of the male fastener member **350**, the prongs **352** return to their normal position, and extend through an opening **354** in the female receiver member **345**, thereby securing the male fastener member **350** within female receiver member **345**. When the male fastener member **350** is engaged with female receiver member **345**, size adjustment member **310** further secures life jacket member **105** around the wearer. In order to disengage male fastener member **350** from female receiver member **345**, the prongs **352** of male fastener member **350** are inwardly depressed and the male fastener member **350** withdrawn from female receiver member **345**. The male fastener member **350** is therefore able to selectively engage with the female receiver member **345**.

[0027] In order to tighten or loosen the fit of the life jacket member **105** around a particular wearer, the length of second end portion **320** of size adjustment member **310** may be adjusted thereby increasing or decreasing the length of size adjustment member **310** when female receiver member **345** and male fastener member **350** are engaged. Life jacket member **105** may be tightened by pulling proximal end **340** and moving male fastener member **350** closer to reinforcement member **305** on the right rear side **300** of life jacket member **105**, thereby reducing the length of size adjustment member **310** when female receiver member **345** and male fastener member **350** are engaged. In order to loosen life jacket member **105**, the male fastener member **350** can be moved away from reinforcement member **305** on the right rear side **300** of life jacket **105**, thereby increasing the length of second end **320** and the overall length of size adjustment member **310**.

[0028] It is also recognized and anticipated that size adjustment member **310** can likewise be relocated to other portions of the life jacket vest **100** so as to be compatible with fastening member **307**. In other words, size adjustment member **310** can be moved to the same locations as fastening member **307** including being relocated to front section **200** or any one of the side sections **205** or **210**. In this regard, if size adjustment member **310** is moved away from reinforcement member **305**, or if reinforcement members **305** are not utilized in an alternative embodiment, size adjustment member **310** can be fed through an alternative opening or gap, such as opening **240**, formed at the proper locations on life jacket member **105** as illustrated in dotted outline form in FIG. **3**. Additionally, size adjustment member **310** can include multiple buckles, no buckles, or other methods of attachment, as well as being located in a different portion of the life jacket vest **100** other than where fastening member **307** is located. For example, other attachment mechanisms can also be used such as installing a zipper on the front or the back of the vest while attaching one buckle to each side of the vest. Also, the zipper can be eliminated by using only buckles. In alternative embodiments, size adjustment member **310** is optional, and a crotch strap may be installed instead. The crotch strap would connect to the life jacket vest **100**, looped in-between the legs of the wearer, thereby further securing the life jacket vest **100** to the wearer. It is also recognized and anticipated that any number of fastening members and adjustment members can be utilized and located on life jacket vest **100** including on the front and/or rear portions of the vest.

[0029] Importantly, the lining **110** of the present life jacket vest **100** as best illustrated in FIG. **4** includes a lining front section **400**, lining rear section **405**, opposed lining side sections **410**, a lining neck portion **415**, a lining collar portion **420**, and lining sleeve members **425**.

[0030] Substantially similarly to the front section **200** of life jacket member **105**, lining front section **400** is located also opposite to lining rear section **405** in its closed state and lining side sections **410** are located adjacent and in-between lining front and rear sections **400** and **405**. Lining sleeve members **425** are located adjacent to both lining front section **400** and lining rear section **405**. As shown in FIG. **6**, when in its open state, lining **110** includes a top portion **401**, a bottom portion **402**A, or **402**B, or **402**C, and opposed side portions **403**A, or **403**B, or **403**C depending upon the overall length of the lining **110** as will be hereinafter explained. Although lining sleeve members **425** are illustrated as being short-sleeved and lining **110** is cropped, it is recognized and anticipated that lining sleeve members **425** may be of different lengths ranging from short-sleeves as illustrated in FIGS. **4-8** to long-sleeves as illustrated in FIG. **1** according to the preferences of the consumer. Similarly, lining **110** may be cropped, hip-length, or any length in-between as will be hereinafter further explained. Lining **110** does not have to be a separate piece of fabric, but can instead be the covering of life jacket member **105**, as described above, so as long as sleeve members **425** are not attached to the arm apertures **235**. It is also recognized and anticipated that lining **110** and life jacket member **105** may be separate layers of fabric on the lining side of the life jacket vest **100**.

[0031] As shown in FIG. **4**, the neck portion **415** of lining **110** is positioned and located above front section **200** of life jacket member **105**, and lining collar portion **420** is located above the lining neck portion **415**. It is recognized and anticipated that the neck portion **415** can have various configurations such as a crew neck, turtle neck, V-neck, or other configuration. In alternative embodiments, the lining neck portion **415** and/or the lining collar portion **420** may be eliminated such that no integrated neck and/or color portion is associated with lining **110**.

[0032] Lining **110** is preferably made out of a stretchy Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) rated fabric thereby providing protection from the sun. Alternatively, the lining may be made out of a mesh material to increase air circulation. Additional materials used to create the lining are envisioned and foreseeable.

[0033] Turning to FIG. **5**, lining **110** is incorporated into life jacket member **105** by inserting the lining sleeve members **425** of lining **110** into the arm apertures **235** of life jacket member **105**. The lining sleeve members **425** extend through arm apertures **235** and the remaining portions of lining **110** are positioned in mating relationship with the corresponding portions of life jacket member **105** as best illustrated in FIG. **6**. Once lining sleeve members **425** are inserted through arm apertures **235**, the sleeve members **425** are not sewn or attached to arm apertures **235**. Instead, the only area where the lining **110** needs to be attached to life jacket member **105** is along a portion of its perimeter such as along first seams **500**. First seams **500** are located adjacent to upper front portion **220**, alongside or adjacent to the fastener member **307** on opposite side portions of the life jacket member **105**, and need not extend to lower portion **225** as shown in FIG. **6** and as will be hereinafter further explained.

[0034] It is important to note that lining **110** can be made of various lengths as shown by the dotted lines in FIG. **6**. For example, lining **110** may be of a size and length as illustrated by dotted lines **500**, **505** and **510** (half-length) or it can be of a size and length as shown by dotted lines **500**, **505**, **520** and **515** (full-length), or it can be of a size and length as shown by dotted lines **500**, **505** and **530**. In addition, any length lining **110** in-between full length (dotted line **515**) and dotted line **530** is also recognized and anticipated including having a lining with only the sleeve members **425** associated therewith. Lining bottom portions **402**A, or **402**B, or **402**C represent just some of the possible bottom portions of the overall lining **110** depending upon its overall length. In this regard, the lining **110** will mate with at least a portion of the life jacket member **105** depending upon its overall length.

[0035] While the only area that must be sewn to attach lining **110** to life jacket member **105** is, for example, at first seams **500**, lining **110** may be attached to life jacket member **105** along other seams. For example, lining **110** may be attached to life jacket member **105** along second seam **505** which is located alongside the neck portion **415**, adjacent to strap portions **230** and the uppermost piece of front section **200**. Similarly, depending on the length of lining **110**, lining **110** may also be attached at third seam **510**, fourth seam **515**, fifth seam **520** or sixth seam **530**. It is also recognized and anticipated that lining **110** may only extend to seam **530** or seam **510** as previously indicated. The lining **110** could be attached along seams **500**, **505**, and **510**. Third seam **510** is a horizontal seam located approximately between upper front portion **220** and lower front portion **225** of life jacket member **105**.

[0036] Fourth seam **515** is also a horizontal seam, below third seam **510**, and along the bottom perimeter of life jacket member **105**. Fifth seams **520** are vertical seams, below first seams **500**, adjacent to lower portion **225**. Sixth seam **530** is another horizontal seam located below the lining sleeve members **425**. Lining **110** may be attached to life jacket member **105** along any or all of the seams **500**, **505**, **510**, **515**, **520** and/or **530** depending upon its length. Other attachment points are likewise recognized and envisioned.

[0037] Since sleeve members **425** are only inserted into arm apertures **235**, and not attached to life jacket **105**, it minimizes constraints in the arm opening areas. The integrated sleeve members **425** therefore enhance the wearer's range of motion and are more comfortable to wear. It is also recognized and anticipated that the lining neck portion **415**, if used, may likewise remain unattached to the upper front portion **220** of life jacket member **105**, or lining neck portion **415** may be only partially attached to the upper front portion **220** of life jacket member **105** along seam **505** thereby also enhancing a wearer's range of motion in the neck area.

[0038] The wearer is able to easily don the life jacket vest with integrated sleeves **100** by inserting an arm into and through each sleeve member **425**. Fastener member **307** can then be secured and the fit adjusted using size adjustment member **310** as seen in FIG. **7**. Once a person has donned the life jacket vest with integrated sleeves **100**, the person has greater mobility and freedom of movement because the lining sleeve members **425** are not attached to arm apertures **235** or to any other portion of life jacket member **105**.

[0039] From the foregoing, it will be seen that the various embodiments of the present invention are well adapted to attain all the objectives and advantages herein above set forth together with still other advantages which are obvious and which are inherent to the present structures. It will be understood that certain features and sub-combinations of the present embodiments are of utility and may be employed without reference to other features and sub-combinations. Since many possible embodiments of the present invention may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention, it is also to be understood that all disclosures herein set forth or illustrated in the accompanying drawings are to be interpreted as illustrative only and not limiting. The various constructions described above and illustrated in the drawings are presented by way of example only and are not intended to limit the concepts, principles and scope of the present invention.

[0040] As is evident from the foregoing description, certain aspects of the present invention are not limited by the particular details of the examples illustrated herein, and it is therefore contemplated that other modifications and applications, or equivalents thereof, will occur to those skilled in the art. The terms "having" and "including" and similar terms as used in the foregoing specification are used in the sense of "optional" or "may include" and not as "required".

[0041] Many changes, modifications, variations and other uses and applications of the present invention will, however, become apparent to those skilled in the art after considering the specification and the accompanying drawings. All such changes, modifications, variations and other uses and applications which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention are deemed to be covered by the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A life jacket vest comprising:

a life jacket member having a front section, a rear section, side sections, and a pair of openings for receiving arms of a wearer; and

a lining including a pair of sleeve members and a perimeter, the lining being positioned and located in mating relationship with at least a portion of the life jacket member wherein the sleeve members are received and extend through the openings of the life jacket member, the lining being attached to the life jacket member along at least a portion of the perimeter.

2. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the life jacket member includes a fastener member.

3. The life jacket vest of claim **2** wherein the fastener member is located along at least a portion of the rear section of the life jacket member.

4. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the life jacket member includes a size adjustment member.

5. The life jacket vest of claim **4** wherein the size adjustment member is associated with the rear section of the life jacket member.

6. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the life jacket member includes a fastener member, and wherein the lining is attached to the life jacket member adjacent to at least a portion of the fastener member.

7. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the perimeter of the lining includes a top portion, a bottom portion, and side portions, the lining being attached to the life jacket member along at least a portion of the side portions of the perimeter.

8. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the perimeter of the lining includes a top portion, a bottom portion, and side portions, the lining being attached to the life jacket member along at least a portion of the top portion of the perimeter.

9. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the perimeter of the lining includes a top portion, a bottom portion, and side portions, the lining being attached to the life jacket member along at least a portion of the bottom portion of the perimeter.

10. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the sleeve members are long-sleeved.

11. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the sleeve members are short-sleeved.

12. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the lining is made of an ultraviolet protection factor rated fabric.

13. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the lining includes a neck portion.

14. The life jacket vest of claim **1** wherein the life jacket member includes at least one reinforcing member extending from at least one of said pair of openings to a bottom portion of the life jacket member.

15. A life jacket vest comprising:

a life jacket member having a front section, a rear section, side sections, a pair of openings for receiving arms of a wearer, and a fastener member located along at least a portion of the life jacket member; and

a lining for mating with the life jacket member, the lining including a front section, a rear section, side sections, a pair of sleeve members, and a perimeter, the lining being positioned and located in mating relationship with the life jacket member wherein the sleeve members are received and extend through the openings of the life jacket member, the lining being attached to the life jacket member along at least a portion of the perimeter.

16. The life jacket vest of claim **15** wherein the lining includes a neck portion.

17. The life jacket vest of claim **15** wherein the life jacket member includes a size adjustment member.

18. The life jacket vest of claim **17** wherein the life jacket member includes an interior space within the front, rear and side sections, at least a portion of the size adjustment member extending within at least a portion of the interior space of the front, side and rear sections.

19. The life jacket vest of claim **15** wherein the lining is attached to the life jacket member adjacent at least a portion of the fastener member.

20. The life jacket vest of claim **15** wherein the lining is made of an ultraviolet protection factor rated fabric.

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