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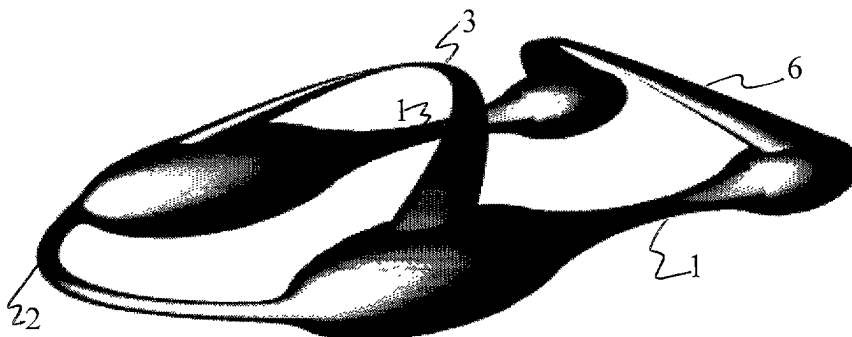
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(54) **Floating apparatus**

(57) Described is a floating apparatus containing two elongate floating bodies (1) which run parallel at a distance from each other. The floating bodies (1) are mutually connected by at least one bracket (2) situated in the plane of the floating bodies.

Another two brackets (3,6) preferably mutually connect the upper part of two floating bodies at the front and at the rear.

These floating apparatuses can be applied for both swimming instruction and for recreation.



Figuur 4a

Description

[0001] The invention relates to a floating apparatus which contains two elongate floating bodies running practically parallel at a distance from each other. These floating apparatuses can be employed for both swimming instruction and for recreation.

[0002] Such an apparatus floating on water is known from the Netherlands patent application 7200291. This floating apparatus consists of two elongate floating bodies which are each fixed close to their ends to the leg ends of a bracket, which brackets are mutually connected by a number of crossbars. On the front side is situated a separate part which is connected with cords to the foremost crossbar.

[0003] These known floating apparatuses have the drawback that components are connected to each other at a great number of positions, which is awkward during both construction and maintenance. Since diverse components are constructed permanently fixed to each other, the known floating apparatus takes up a lot of space, and this represents an obstacle, for instance for swimming pools, in the way of applying these floating apparatuses in swimming instruction. In the case of use in the recreational sphere it is also a drawback to have to transport an apparatus which takes up so much space.

[0004] The object of the invention is to provide a floating apparatus which does not have the above stated drawbacks. The floating apparatus of the type stated in the preamble substantially consists according to the invention of two floating bodies which run practically parallel at a distance from each other and which are mutually connected by at least one bracket situated in the plane of the floating bodies, particularly on the front side of the floating bodies. The front side is understood to mean the side in the forward floating or swimming direction. Someone who learns to swim with said floating apparatus or who floats therewith for recreational purposes has a firm hold on this bracket which functions as steering bar or support bar and which increases the buoyancy of the two floating bodies.

[0005] In further preference the floating apparatus contains a further bracket which mutually connects the top part of the two floating bodies. This bracket is advantageously situated on the front side of the two floating bodies but can also connect the rear sides. The brackets can of course also be formed integrally, such as for instance the bracket situated in the plane on the front side of the floating bodies can be formed integrally with a bracket mutually connecting the top part of the two floating bodies on the front side.

[0006] In a particular preferred embodiment, for which the name "Cataman" has been thought up, there is a bracket situated in the plane of the floating bodies as well as two on the top side of the floating bodies, one of which is at the front and one at the rear. This embodiment is particularly stable and has a great buoyancy. The brackets are also relatively small, whereby they can

be easily transported.

[0007] In another advantageous embodiment of the invention, both floating bodies are also mutually connected using two brackets, wherein the one bracket connects the front part of the first floating body to the rear part of the second floating body, while the other bracket connects the front part of the second floating body to the rear part of the first floating body. It will be apparent that both floating bodies are wholly interchangeable. This embodiment is also exceptionally stable and has a great buoyancy.

[0008] The form of the two floating bodies can be practically cylindrical. Both floating bodies can also be thickened in the middle, but the form is recommended wherein the front part, and in further preference also the rear part, are thickened.

[0009] At least one of the brackets is preferably fastened detachably to the floating bodies. Being able to take the apparatus apart easily can represent a significant aspect of the invention in transport of the floating apparatus, which forms an important part in the use in the recreational sector and in storage thereof, which is important when the floating apparatus is used in a swimming pool with limited space. If however such floating bodies have to be immediately operational, for instance for hiring-out purposes, they are then preferably not removable but are formed integrally.

[0010] The bracket situated on the front side in the plane of the floating bodies, also referred to as steering bar or support bar, can advantageously be assembled for instance using the following described construction: an insert, which is preferably already mounted in the factory on the steering bar or support bar, is pushed into an opening mounted in the floating body and corresponding in size to the insert, and then rotated through a quarter-turn. Conversely, the steering bar or support bar can also be detached easily by being rotated back a quarter-turn and then being pulled out of the opening mounted in the floating body.

[0011] The brackets which mutually connect the upper part of the two floating bodies are preferably fixed to the floating bodies using so-called detachable suspension bridge fastenings.

[0012] In a preferred embodiment there is fixed to the bracket which mutually connects the top part of the two floating bodies at the front a connection which preferably consists of one elastic band which is length-adjustable. This elastic band is preferably fastened to the bracket using for instance sling fastenings. It is also possible to envisage a connection which consists of a sling which at least during use supports the user, such as for instance the learner receiving swimming instruction or the recreational floater, and which is fixed to the bracket using two elastic bindings, such as for instance springs.

[0013] The floating bodies preferably take a hollow form, although a solid embodiment also forms part of the invention. The apparatus can be embodied in for instance metal, wood or preferably plastic. If tubular ma-

terial is chosen, this results in a light and inexpensive construction. It is also possible to make use of different materials in the same floater. The outer ends can optionally be provided with a cover which closes in airtight and moisture-tight manner.

[0014] The present invention will be further elucidated with reference to the annexed figures, wherein figures 1-4 show different embodiments of the floating apparatus according to the invention in perspective view:

figure 1 shows a floating apparatus comprising two elongate floating bodies (1) mutually connected by a bracket (2) in the plane on the front side of the floating bodies and by a bracket (3) on the top side of the two floating bodies;

figure 2 shows a floating apparatus comprising two elongate floating bodies (1) mutually connected by a bracket (2) in the plane on the front side of the floating bodies and by a bracket (3) on the top side at the front of the two floating bodies;

figure 3 shows a floating apparatus comprising two elongate floating bodies (1) mutually connected by a bracket (2) in the plane on the front side of the floating bodies and also by two brackets, wherein the one bracket (4) connects the front part of the first floating body to the rear part of the second floating body, and the other bracket (5) connects the front part of the second floating body to the rear part of the first floating body;

figure 4a shows a floating apparatus comprising two elongate floating bodies (1) mutually connected by a bracket (2) in the plane on the front side of the floating bodies, by a bracket (3) on the top side at the front of the two floating bodies and by a bracket (6) on the top side at the rear of the two floating bodies;

figures 4b and 4c shows floating apparatuses as described in figure 4a but wherein the brackets are embodied in a material different from that of the floating bodies;

figure 5 shows a front view of a bracket for connecting on the top side at the front of the two floating bodies (3) using suspension bridge fastenings (7) and connected by means of sling fastenings (8) to a connection consisting of two adjustable elastic bindings, such as for instance springs (9), from which a wider sling (10) is suspended from both downward hanging ends.

[0015] The figures are schematic and not drawn to scale. Some dimensions in particular are highly exaggerated for the sake of clarity.

[0016] The different embodiments shown in the fig-

ures of the floating apparatus according to the invention consist of floating bodies (1) which run practically parallel and the dimensions of which are adapted to the purpose for which the apparatus will be used.

[0017] All of the embodiments of the floating apparatus shown in the figures are suitable for giving swimming instruction. This is particularly the case for a floating apparatus with a bracket as shown in figure 5, wherein the connection fastened to the bracket serves to support the swimmer or floater in the loop on the water side.

[0018] The floating apparatus according to the invention is also suitable for swimming and floating as recreation; snorkelling for instance becomes a safe, relaxed activity. A considerable speed can also be generated, certainly when flippers are used. The floating apparatus is also suitable for carrying out research on the bed of a watercourse as well as for other underwater operations; tools can be mounted on the apparatus in sundry ways, such as for instance on a screw hook or in a bin mounted as swing.

[0019] Application of the floating apparatus according to the invention for paramilitary purposes is also very conceivable, as it is possible to lie very low above the water and to move forward quickly and noiselessly.

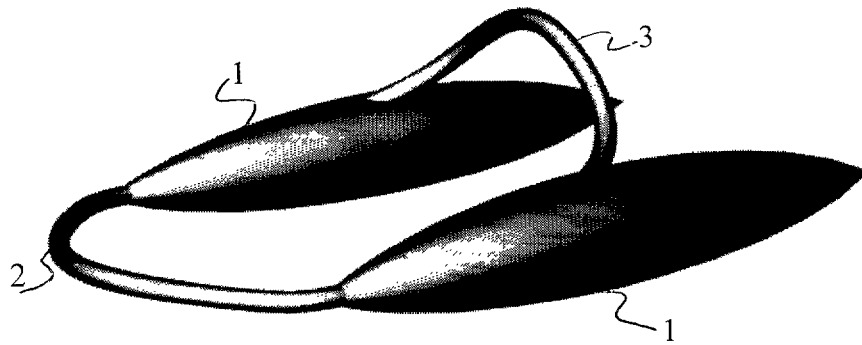
[0020] An alternative option to floating on water is the use of the floating apparatus according to the invention as sliding apparatus which slides over snow, such as a bobsleigh. It will be apparent to the skilled person that the floating apparatus as described above will require one or more modifications for this application. The material of which the floating bodies consist will have to be such that in any case the underside of the floating bodies can slide over snow or ice. The elastic band fastened to the bracket which mutually connects the top parts of the sliding bodies will also be shorter than for use in water, so that the user of the sliding body is situated above the snow or ice. The same will of course apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the use of a sling which is connected with elastic bindings, such as for instance springs, to the bracket mutually connecting the top parts of the sliding bodies.

[0021] Although the present invention has been further elucidated in the foregoing on the basis of a number of embodiments, it will be apparent that the invention is by no means limited thereto.

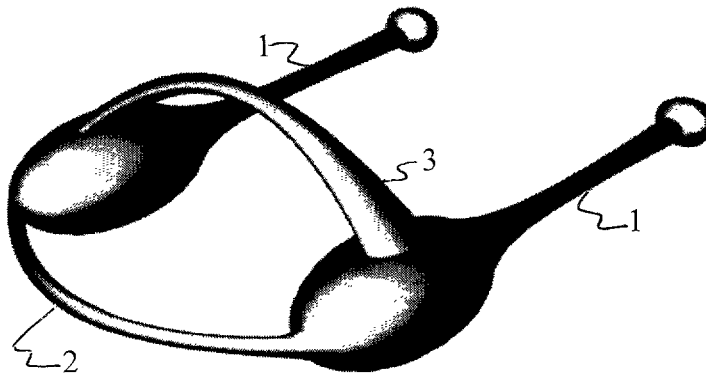
Claims

1. Floating apparatus comprising two elongate floating bodies which run practically parallel at a distance from each other and which are mutually connected by at least one bracket situated in the plane of the floating bodies.
2. Floating apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the bracket is mounted on the front side of the floating bodies.

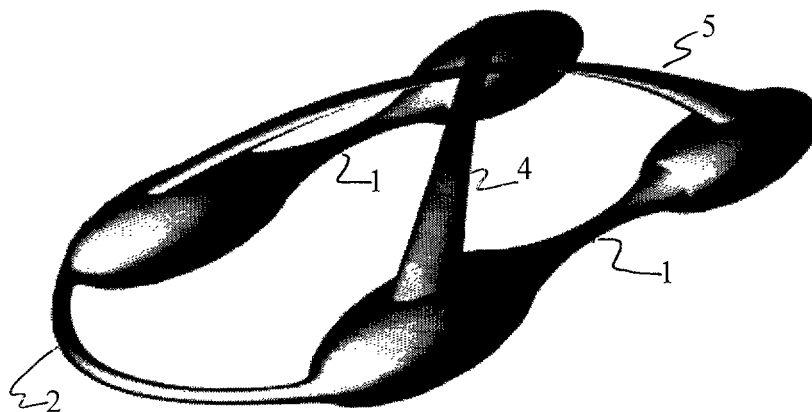
3. Floating apparatus as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the floating apparatus contains a further bracket which mutually connects the top part of the two floating bodies. 5
4. Floating apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein the bracket mutually connects the top part of the two floating bodies at the front.
5. Floating apparatus as claimed in claim 3 or 4, wherein a further bracket mutually connects the top part of the two floating bodies at the rear. 10
6. Floating apparatus as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the top parts of the two floating bodies are also mutually connected using two brackets, wherein the one bracket connects the front part of the first floating body to the rear part of the second floating body, while the other bracket connects the front part of the second floating body to the rear part of the first floating body. 15 20
7. Floating apparatus as claimed in one or more of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** each of the two floating bodies is thickened on the front side relative to the rest of the floating bodies. 25
8. Floating apparatus as claimed in one or more of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** each of the two floating bodies is thickened on the rear side relative to the rest of the floating bodies. 30
9. Floating apparatus as claimed in one or more of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** at least one of the brackets is detachable. 35
10. Floating apparatus as claimed in one or more of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the floating bodies take a hollow form. 40
11. Floating apparatus as claimed in one or more of the foregoing claims, wherein a connection is fixed to one or more brackets in a manner such that a user is supported at least during use. 45
12. Floating apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein the connection consists of an elastic band which supports the user of the floating apparatus at least during use. 50
13. Floating apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein the connection consists of a sling which is fixed to one or more brackets using elastic bindings and which supports the user of the floating apparatus at least during use. 55
14. Sliding apparatus comprising a floating apparatus as claimed in one or more of the foregoing claims, wherein the floating bodies comprise sliding material so that they can slide over snow or ice.



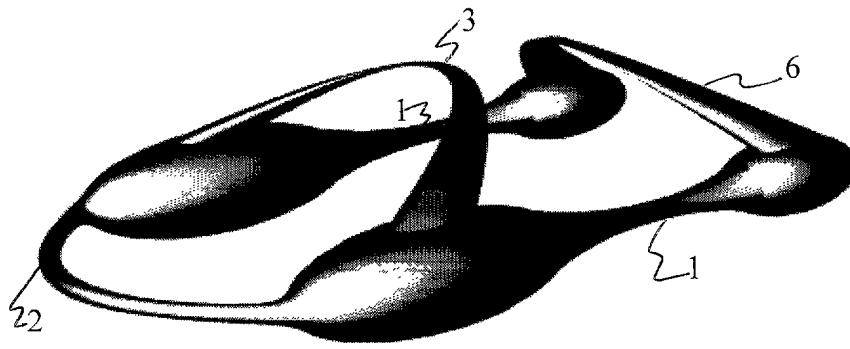
Figuur 1



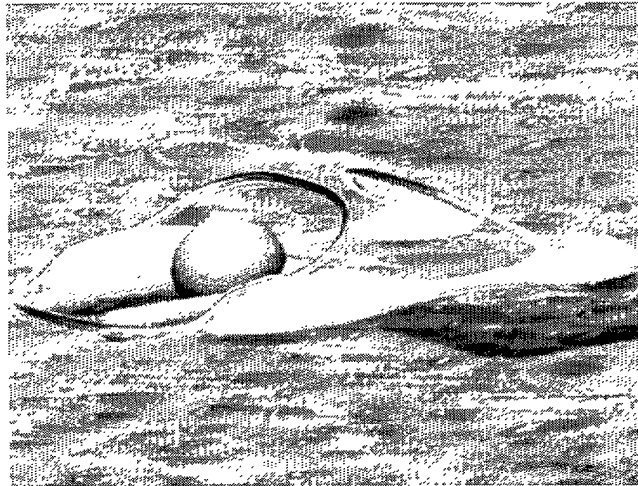
Figuur 2



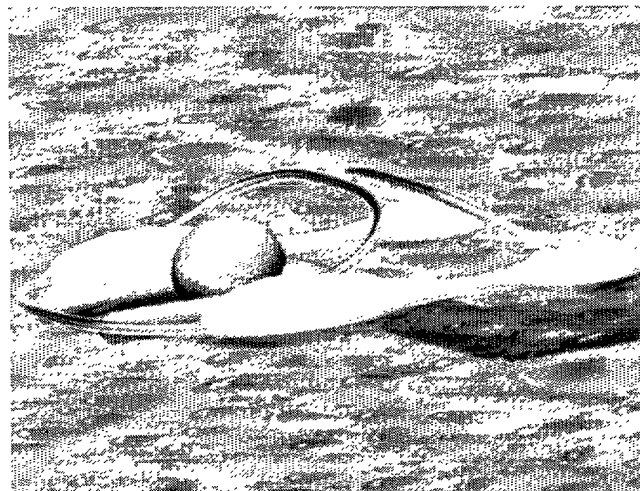
Figuur 3



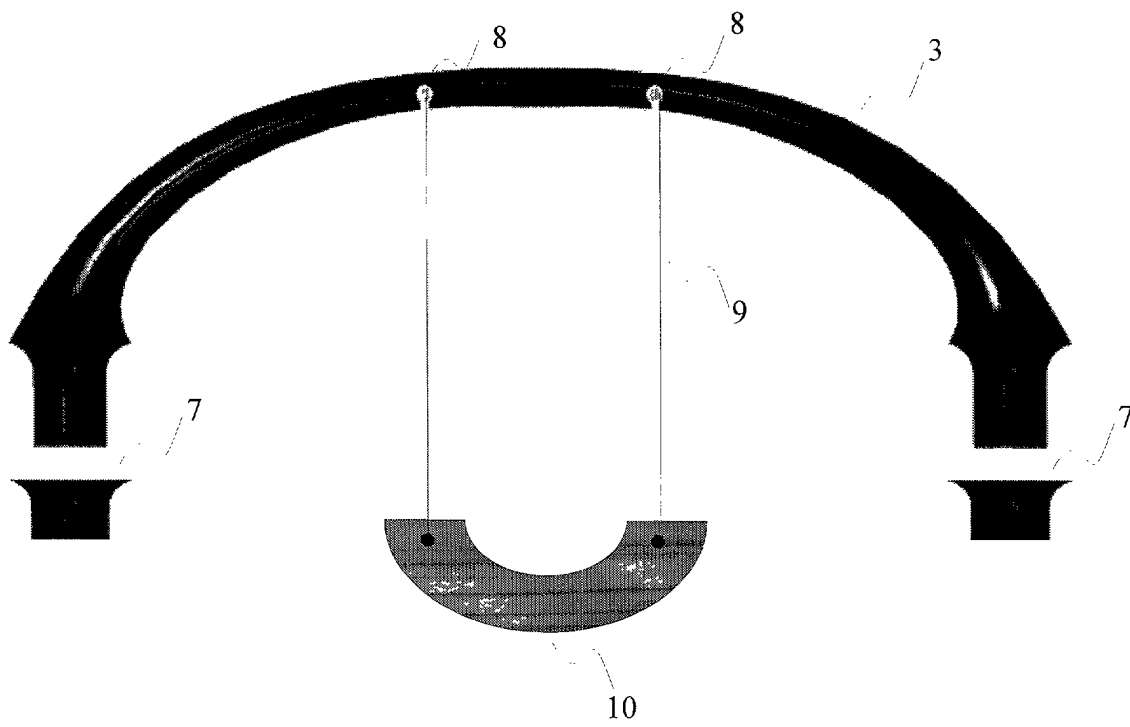
Figuur 4a



Figuur 4b



Figuur 4c



Figuur 5



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 01 20 1613

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search MUNICH		Date of completion of the search 10 October 2001	Examiner Curzi, D
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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