

(19)



(11)

**EP 4 548 793 A1**

(12)

## EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:  
**07.05.2025 Bulletin 2025/19**

(51) International Patent Classification (IPC):  
**A43B 3/16** (2022.01) **A41D 17/00** (2006.01)  
**A43B 3/18** (2022.01)

(21) Application number: **24201483.5**

(52) Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC):  
**A43B 3/16; A41D 17/00; A41D 17/005; A43B 3/18**

(22) Date of filing: **19.09.2024**

(84) Designated Contracting States:  
**AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB  
GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC ME MK MT NL  
NO PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR**  
Designated Extension States:  
**BA**  
Designated Validation States:  
**GE KH MA MD TN**

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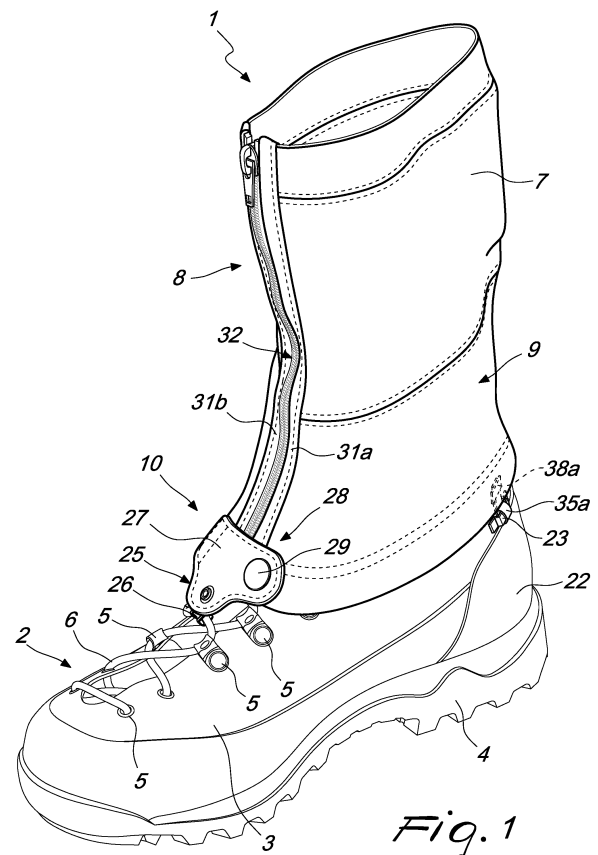
(30) Priority: **02.11.2023 IT 202300004497 U**  
**31.01.2024 IT 202400000447 U**

### (54) REMOVABLE GAITER FOR PROTECTING FOOTWEAR

(57) A removable gaiter (1) for protecting footwear (2) comprising an upper (3), enveloping the foot of the user, which is associated with a sole (4) and is provided with eyelets (5) for laces for tying (6).

The removable gaiter comprises an upper portion (7), which when deployed envelops the area (8) of the tibia of the user, and is connected to a lower portion (9), which when deployed envelops the area of the instep (10).

The lower portion (9) is provided, on the lower perimeter edge (11), with first means for temporary engagement (12) with complementarily-shaped grip means (13) associated with and protruding laterally from the upper (3) in an area above that of the heel (22) of the sole (4).



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## Description

**[0001]** The present application relates to a removable gaiter for protecting footwear, in particular for limiting the infiltration of water/mud into the footwear and for protecting the areas of the instep and of at least some of the tibia of the user.

**[0002]** Nowadays Italian patent application no. 1019996900540874 is known which claims a gaiter for protection against the elements, generally tubular in shape, of the type comprising, firstly, a lower part which covers, at least partially, the bootleg of the footwear in a front area for introducing and enclosing the foot of a user and the edge of the lower end of which is designed to coincide with the edge of said bootleg and, secondly, an upper part designed to envelop the lower part of the leg of said user above the bootleg of the footwear, characterized in that an at least partially peripheral faceplate protrudes from at least one portion of the edge of the end of the corresponding lower part, constituting the extension of said edge so as to increase the extent of its protection beyond the latter.

**[0003]** This solution however has many drawbacks: in fact, the gaiter is fixed to the footwear by means of a strap which is passed under the sole; this solution is not optimal given that while walking the strap is subjected to continual impacts with the ground and therefore also with blunt objects present in the ground, which result in its rapid wear or breakage.

**[0004]** Alternatively, the use is indicated of a cable. However, this solution also presents a further drawback, which is that the cable might catch on objects protruding from the ground, constituting a hazard for the user who could trip while walking.

**[0005]** Furthermore, the use of straps or cables entails, for the user, the need to couple one end of the strap or cable using tension adjustment means associated with the gaiter: this operation is not easy, since the user has to bend down in order to grasp this end and then tension it and couple it to the means.

**[0006]** This operation is inconvenient because it requires the user to use both hands, and these can only be used after a difficult rotation of the trunk, moreover performed in a bent position.

**[0007]** The aim of the present invention is to eliminate the above-mentioned drawbacks in conventional gaiters for footwear, by providing a removable gaiter that can be applied to the footwear rapidly, precisely and easily.

**[0008]** Within this aim, an object of the invention is to provide a removable gaiter that makes it possible to perform the coupling of the gaiter to the footwear using only one hand.

**[0009]** Another object of the invention is to provide a removable gaiter that makes it possible to perform the coupling of the gaiter to the footwear while maintaining a comfortable position for the body.

**[0010]** Another object of the invention is to provide a removable gaiter that in which the above characteristics

can also be achieved in the step of disengaging the gaiter from the footwear.

**[0011]** Another object of the invention is to provide a removable gaiter that makes it possible to offer optimal protection of the areas of the instep and of part of the tibia of the user, so increasing comfort while walking.

**[0012]** Another object of the invention is to provide a removable gaiter that enables the user to walk safely, since there are no elements in the gaiter that, when the sole impacts against the ground, could catch on objects protruding from the ground which could cause the user to trip while walking.

**[0013]** Another object of the invention is to provide a gaiter that makes it possible to achieve a good impermeability for the areas of the instep and of part of the tibia of the user.

**[0014]** Another object is to provide a removable gaiter that, in addition to the foregoing characteristics, is also reliable and safe in use, and which can be provided in a simple manner with the usual and conventional machinery and plants.

**[0015]** This aim and these and other objects that will become more apparent hereinafter are achieved by a removable gaiter, for protecting a footwear comprising an upper, enveloping the foot of the user, which is associated with a sole and is provided with eyelets for laces for tying, which is characterized in that it comprises an upper portion, which when deployed envelops the area of the tibia of the user, and is connected to a lower portion, which when deployed envelops the area of the instep, said lower portion being provided, on the lower perimeter edge, with first means for temporary engagement with complementarily-shaped grip means associated with and protruding laterally from said upper 3 in an area above that of the heel of said sole.

**[0016]** Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will become better apparent from the detailed description of a particular embodiment, illustrated by way of non-limiting example in the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the gaiter according to the invention associated with an item of footwear; Figure 2 is a perspective view of the gaiter according to the invention, wherein the gaiter is disengaged from the footwear;

Figure 3 is a side view of the gaiter according to the invention with the gaiter associated with the footwear;

Figure 4 is a detail of the gaiter according to the invention;

Figure 5 is a cross-sectional view of the gaiter according to the invention taken along the line V-V in Figure 3 in the step of coupling the first means for temporary engagement to the grip means;

Figure 6 is a view similar to the previous one of the gaiter according to the invention in the condition of full coupling between the first means for temporary

engagement and the grip means;

Figure 7 is a detail of the gaiter associated with the footwear;

Figure 8 shows the inside of the gaiter in the condition in which it is not associated with the footwear and in an open condition;

Figure 9 shows, in a condition similar to the previous figure, the outside of the gaiter.

**[0017]** With reference to the figures, the reference numeral 1 generally designates a removable gaiter for protecting a footwear 2, particularly, but not exclusively, for the practice of hunting, cross-country skiing, trekking, alpine skiing, or safety in the workplace.

**[0018]** The footwear 2 is constituted by an upper 3, enveloping the foot of the user and optionally part of the tibia of the user, which is associated with a sole 4, and is provided with eyelets or lace-holes or holes 5 for laces for tying 6.

**[0019]** The removable gaiter 1 comprises an upper 20 portion 7 which, when deployed, i.e. when the gaiter is associated with the footwear, envelops the area of the tibia 8 of the user.

**[0020]** The upper portion 7 is connected to a lower portion 9 which, when deployed, envelops the area 25 of the instep.

**[0021]** The upper portion 7 and the lower portion 9 are or are not made with the same soft material, which can be, for each one or separately, optionally partially or completely waterproof.

**[0022]** In the condition in which the gaiter is not associated with the footwear, the gaiter can be arranged on a plane that gives it a substantially frustum shape with curved lateral sides.

**[0023]** The lower portion 9 has, on the lower perimeter edge 11, first means for temporary engagement 12 which interact with complementarily-shaped grip means 13 associated with the footwear 2.

**[0024]** The first means 12 are constituted, in the specific embodiment shown, by two strips 35a, 35b, made of the material known by the Velcro® trademark, which are preferably rectangular and are coupled, at a first end 36a, 36b, by means of for example stitching, to the lower perimeter edge 11 of the lower portion 9 in an area adjacent to a vertical central axis 16 to the gaiter in the condition in which the gaiter is opened out on a plane.

**[0025]** The grip means 13 are associated with and protrude laterally from the upper 3 in an area above that of the heel 22 of the sole 4 and are located, in the condition in which the gaiter 1 is associated with the footwear, under the strips 35a, 35b.

**[0026]** The grip means 13 are each constituted by a band 23, advantageously metallic or made of a resilient material, shaped substantially like the Greek letter Q (omega) and arranged approximately parallel to the sole 4 transversely to the upper 3 at the heel area 22.

**[0027]** The shape of the strips 35a, 35b and of each one of the bands 23 is such as to define, once the respective

band 23 is associated with the upper 3, a space 24 sufficient to allow the strips 35a, 35b to be inserted into it and for them to be folded until their second, free end 37a, 37b, for example with the hook part of the Velcro® system, is positioned against an adapted strip 38a, 38b, with the loop part of the Velcro® system, which is attached internally to the gaiter in an area that lies above the lower perimeter edge 11 of the lower portion 9.

**[0028]** The disengagement between the first means for temporary engagement 12 and the grip means 13 can therefore occur simply by manually detaching the second, free end 37a, 37b of the strips 35a, 35b from the strips 38a, 38b.

**[0029]** There are second means for temporary engagement 25 to at least one of the laces 6 which are constituted, in the specific embodiment shown, by a hook 26 protruding from the vertex of a substantially triangular flap 27 one side of which is stitched to the gaiter at an end of the lower perimeter edge 11.

**[0030]** There are furthermore third means for temporary engagement 28 of the lower lateral ends of the upper portion 7 and the lower portion 9 once coupled together.

**[0031]** In fact, the cap 29 of an automatic press-stud is placed on the other face of the flap 27, outside the lower portion 9, and cooperates with an adapted socket 30 associated with the other face of the gaiter to which the flap 27 is fixed.

**[0032]** The tapes of a zipper 32 are associated with the lateral edges 31a, 31b of the upper portion 7 and the lower portion 9 to draw them together so as to envelop, when deployed, the areas of the instep 10 and of the tibia 8.

**[0033]** Thus, it has been found that the gaiter according to the invention has fully achieved the intended aim and objects, a gaiter having been provided that can be applied to an item of footwear rapidly, precisely and easily, while making it possible to perform the coupling to the footwear and disengagement using only one hand.

**[0034]** This coupling and disengagement can be performed while maintaining a comfortable position for the body without needing to rotate the trunk.

**[0035]** Once the gaiter is applied, excellent protection and optionally a watertight seal is obtained for the areas of the instep and at least of part of the tibia of the user, so increasing comfort while walking, such walking lastly being safe since there are no elements in the gaiter that, when the sole impacts against the ground, could catch on objects protruding from the ground which could cause the user to trip while walking.

**[0036]** The invention is of course susceptible of numerous modifications and variations, all of which are within the scope of the appended claims.

**[0037]** Thus, for example, the height dimension of the upper portion 7 which when deployed, i.e. when the gaiter is associated with the footwear, envelops the area of the tibia 8 of the user can vary as a function of the degree of cover of the tibia that it is desired to have.

**[0038]** Naturally the materials used as well as the

dimensions of the individual components of the invention may be more relevant according to specific requirements.

**[0039]** The characteristics indicated above as advantageous, convenient or the like, may also be missing or be substituted by equivalent characteristics.

**[0040]** The disclosures in Italian Utility patent Applications No. 202023000004497 and 202024000000447 from which this application claims priority are incorporated herein by reference.

**[0041]** Where technical features mentioned in any claim are followed by reference signs, those reference signs have been included for the sole purpose of increasing the intelligibility of the claims and accordingly, such reference signs do not have any limiting effect on the interpretation of each element identified by way of example by such reference signs.

## Claims

1. A removable gaiter (1), for protecting a footwear (2) comprising an upper (3), enveloping the foot of the user, which is associated with a sole (4) and is provided with eyelets (5) for laces for tying (6), which is **characterized in that** it comprises an upper portion (7), which when deployed envelops the area (8) of the tibia of the user, and is connected to a lower portion (9), which when deployed envelops the area (10) of the instep, said lower portion (9) being provided, on the lower perimeter edge (11), with first means for temporary engagement (12) with complementarily-shaped grip means (13) associated with and protruding laterally from said upper (3) in an area above that of the heel (22) of said sole (4).
2. The removable gaiter (1) according to claim 1, **characterized in that** it comprises second means for temporary engagement (25) with at least one of said laces (6) and third means for temporary engagement (28) of the lower lateral ends of said upper portion (7) and said lower portion (9) once coupled together.
3. The removable gaiter (1) according to claim 1, **characterized in that** a zipper (32) is attached to lateral edges (31a, 31b) of said upper portion (7) and said lower portion (9) to draw the lateral edges together so as to envelop, when deployed, said areas (10) of the instep and (8) of said tibia.
4. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said upper portion (7) and said lower portion (9) are made with the same soft material, which can be, for each one or separately, partially or completely waterproof.
5. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that**, in the

condition in which said gaiter is not associated with said footwear (2), it can be arranged on a plane that gives the gaiter a substantially frustum shape with curved lateral edges (31a, 31b).

6. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said first means for temporary engagement (12) are constituted by two strips (35a, 35b), made of material known by the Velcro® trademark, which are preferably rectangular and at a first end (36a, 36b) are attached, preferably by means of stitching, to said lower perimeter edge (11) of said lower portion (9) in an area adjacent to a vertical central axis (16) to said gaiter (1) in the condition in which said gaiter (1) is opened out on a plane.
7. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said grip means (13) are associated with and protrude laterally from said upper (3) in an area that lies above that of the heel (22) of said sole (4) and in an area that lies under said strips (35a, 35b).
8. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said grip means (13) are constituted by a band (23a, 23b), metallic or made of a resilient material, shaped substantially like the Greek letter Q (omega) and arranged substantially parallel to said sole (4) transversely to said upper (3) at the heel area (22).
9. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the shape of said bands (23) is such as to define, once they are associated with said upper (3), a sufficient space (24) to allow the insertion of said strips (35a, 35b) into it.
10. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** after said two strips (35a, 35b) are inserted into said space (24) comes the subsequent folding thereof until their second, free end (37a, 37b), preferably with a hook part of the Velcro® system, is positioned against a strip (38a, 38b), with a loop part of the Velcro® system, which is attached internally to said gaiter (1) in an area that lies above said lower perimeter edge (11) of said lower portion (9).
11. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the disengagement between said first means for temporary engagement (12) and said grip means (13) occurs by manually detaching said second, free end (37a, 37b) of said strips (35a, 35b) from said strips (38a, 38b).

12. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said second means for temporary engagement (25) to at least one of said laces (6) are constituted by a hook (26) protruding from the vertex of a substantially triangular flap (27) one side of which is stitched to said gaiter (1) at an end of said lower perimeter edge (11). 5
13. The removable gaiter (1) according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the cap (29) of an automatic press-stud is placed on the face of said flap (27) directed away from said lower portion (9) and cooperates with a socket (30) associated with the other face of said gaiter (1) to which said flap (27) is fixed, the tapes of a zipper (32) being associated with the lateral edges (31a, 31b) of said upper portion (7) and said lower portion (9) to draw the lateral edges together so as to envelop, when deployed, said areas of the instep (10) and of the tibia (8). 10 15 20

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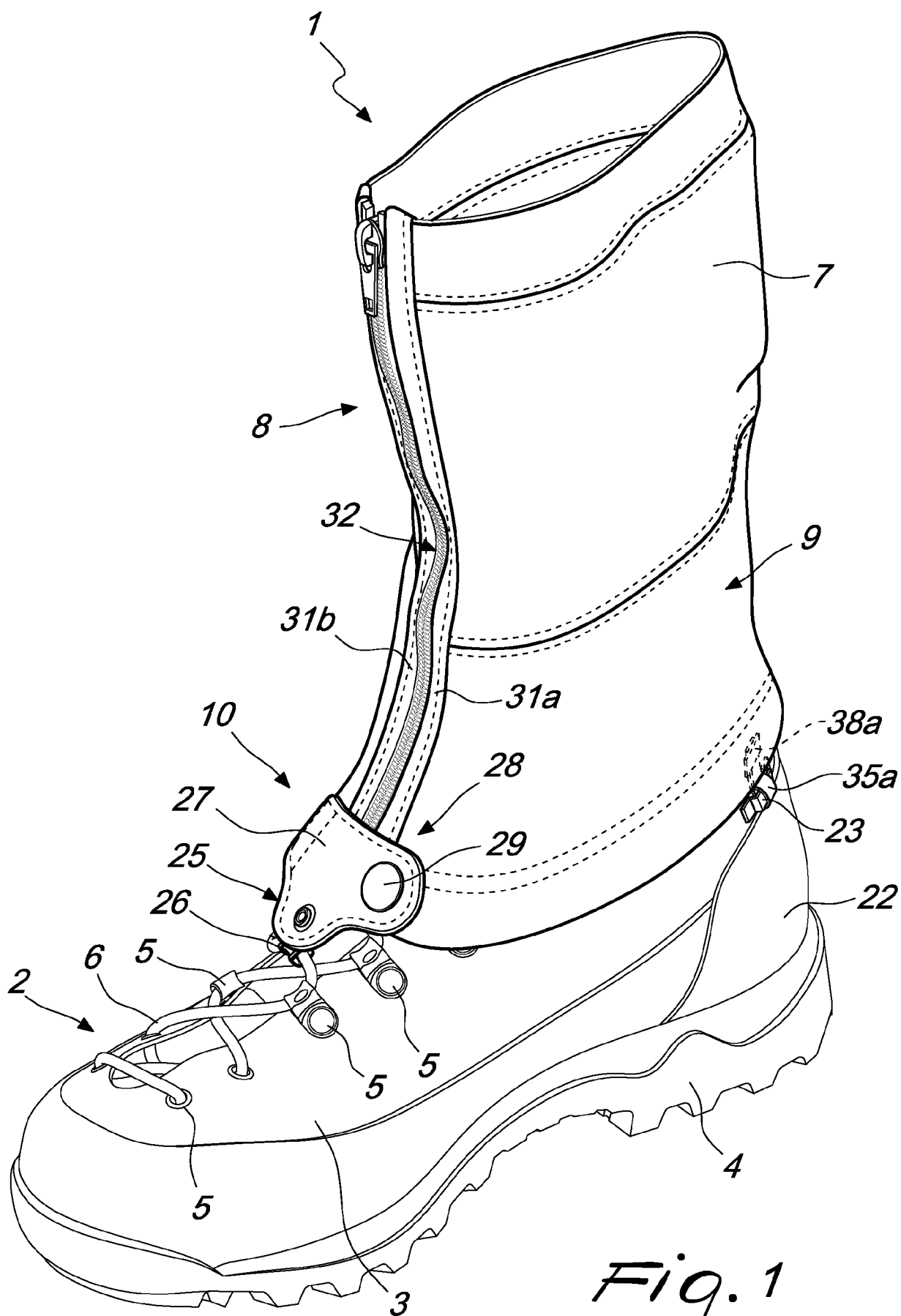
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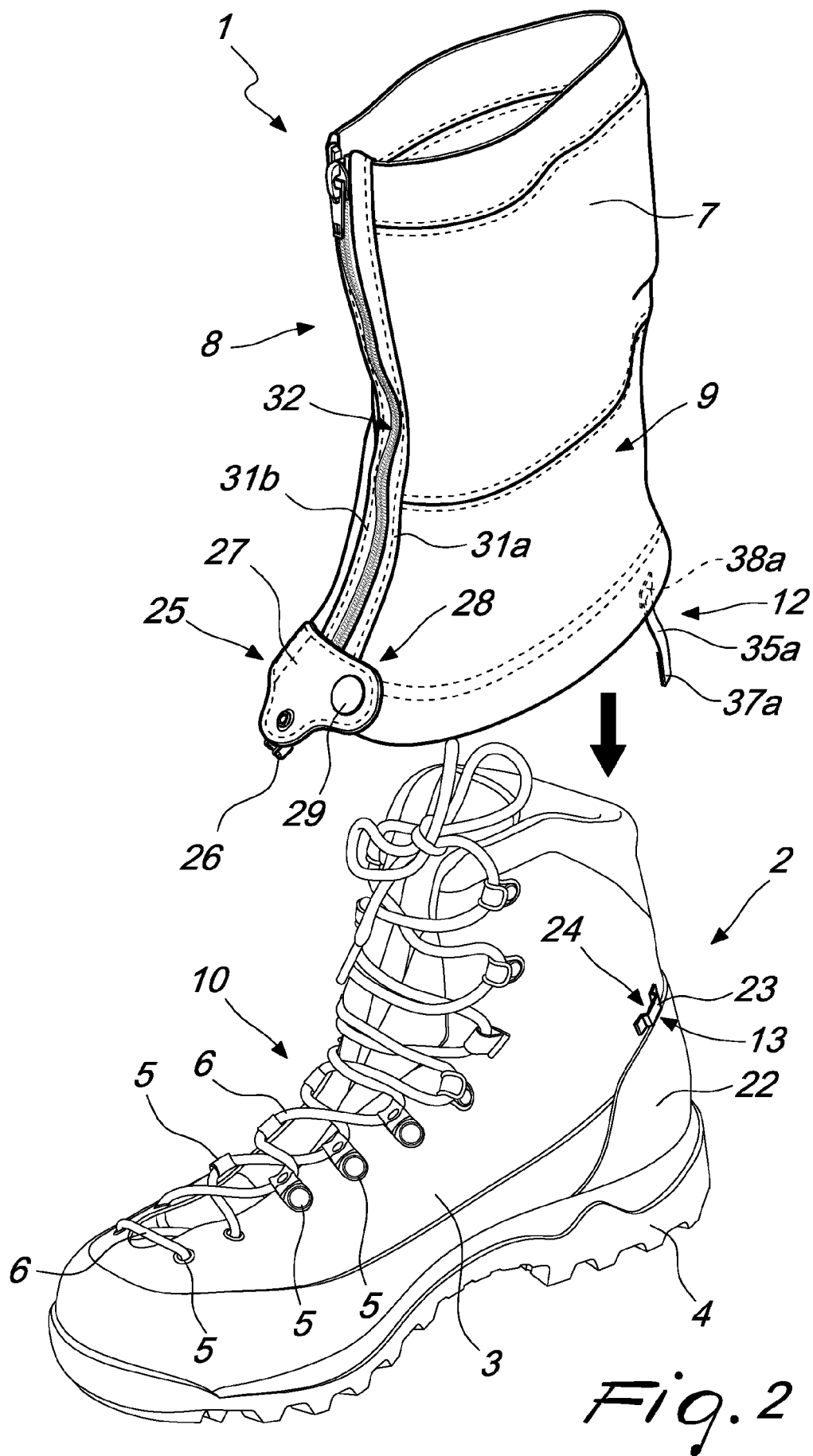
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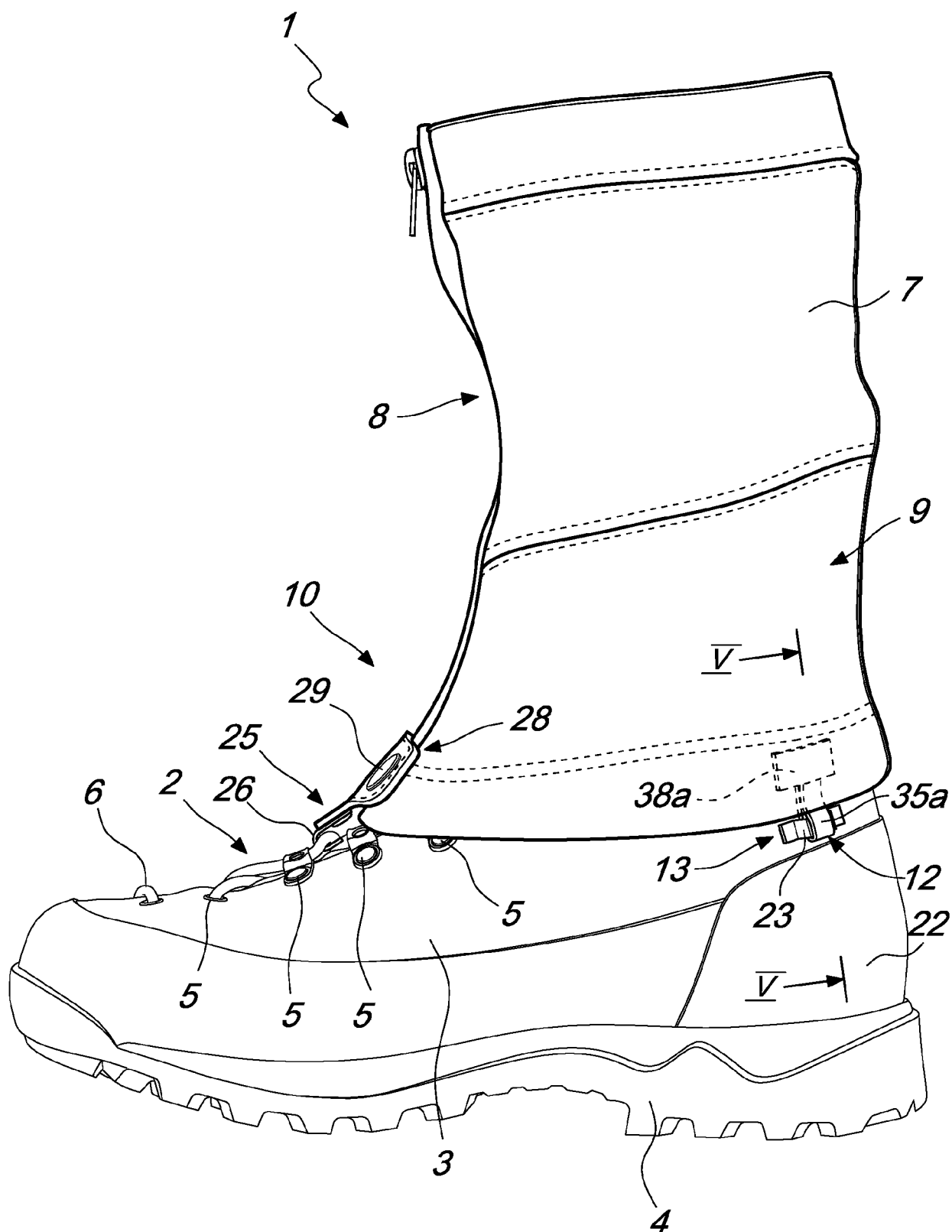
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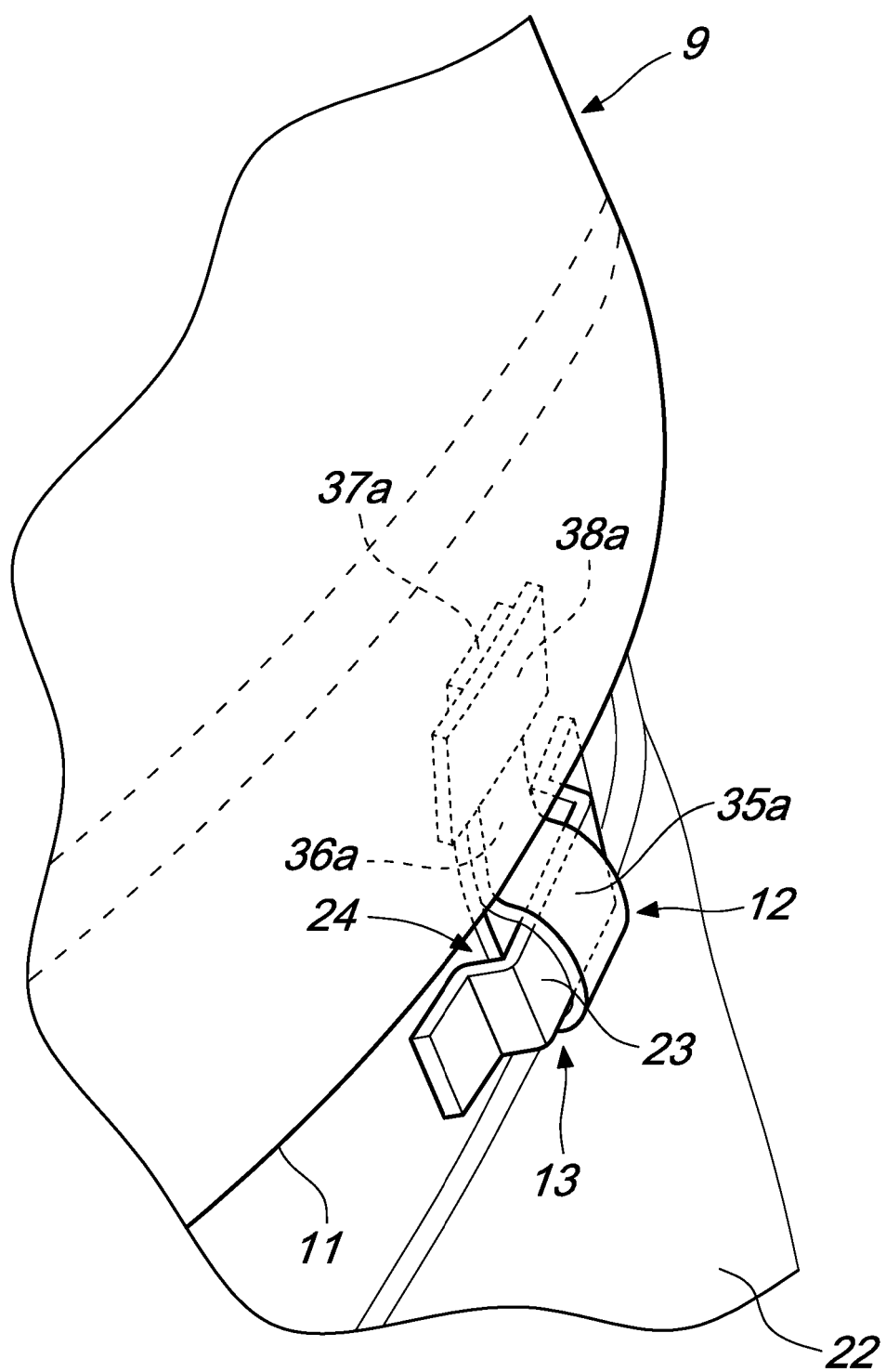




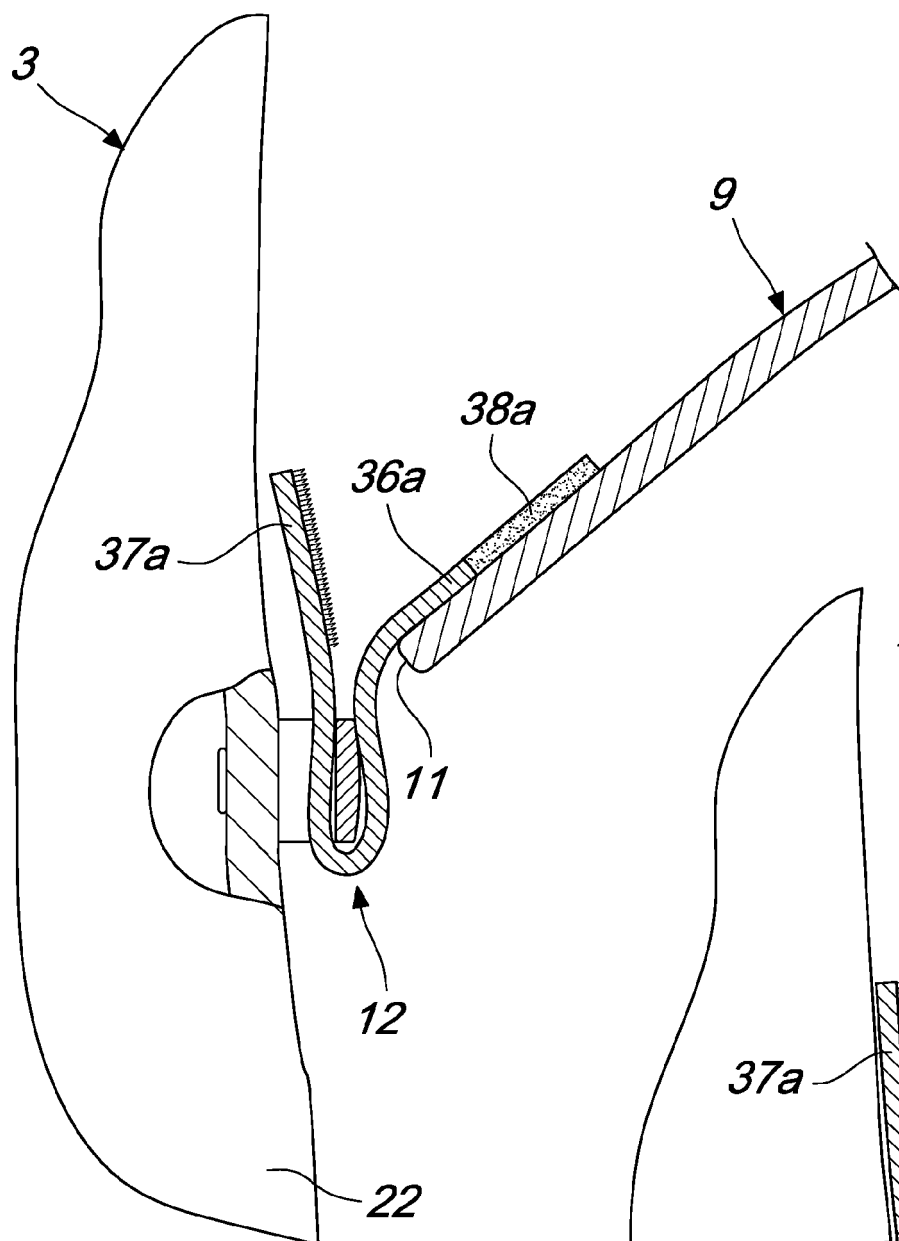
*Fig. 2*



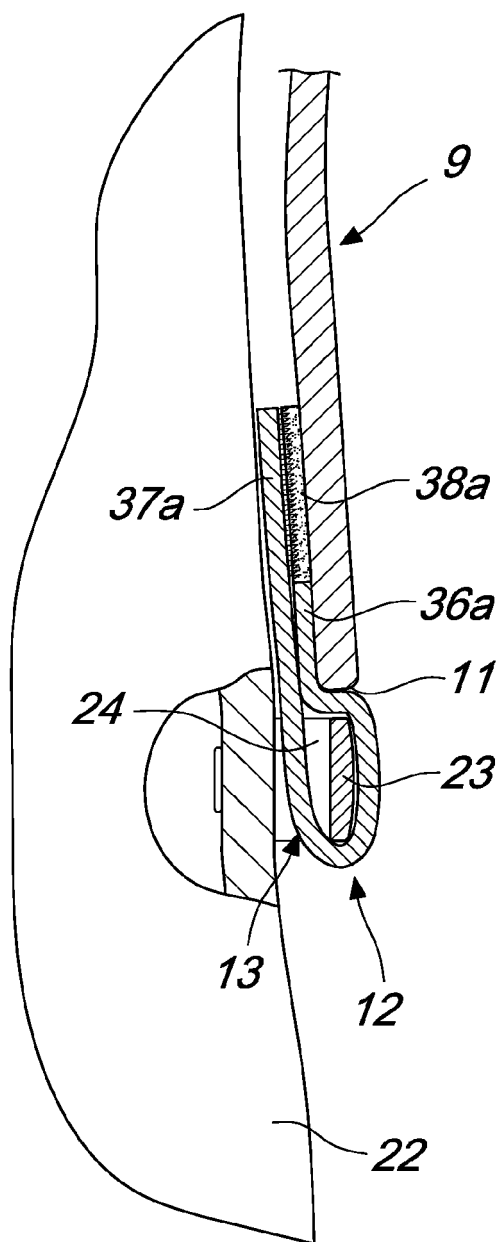
*Fig. 3*



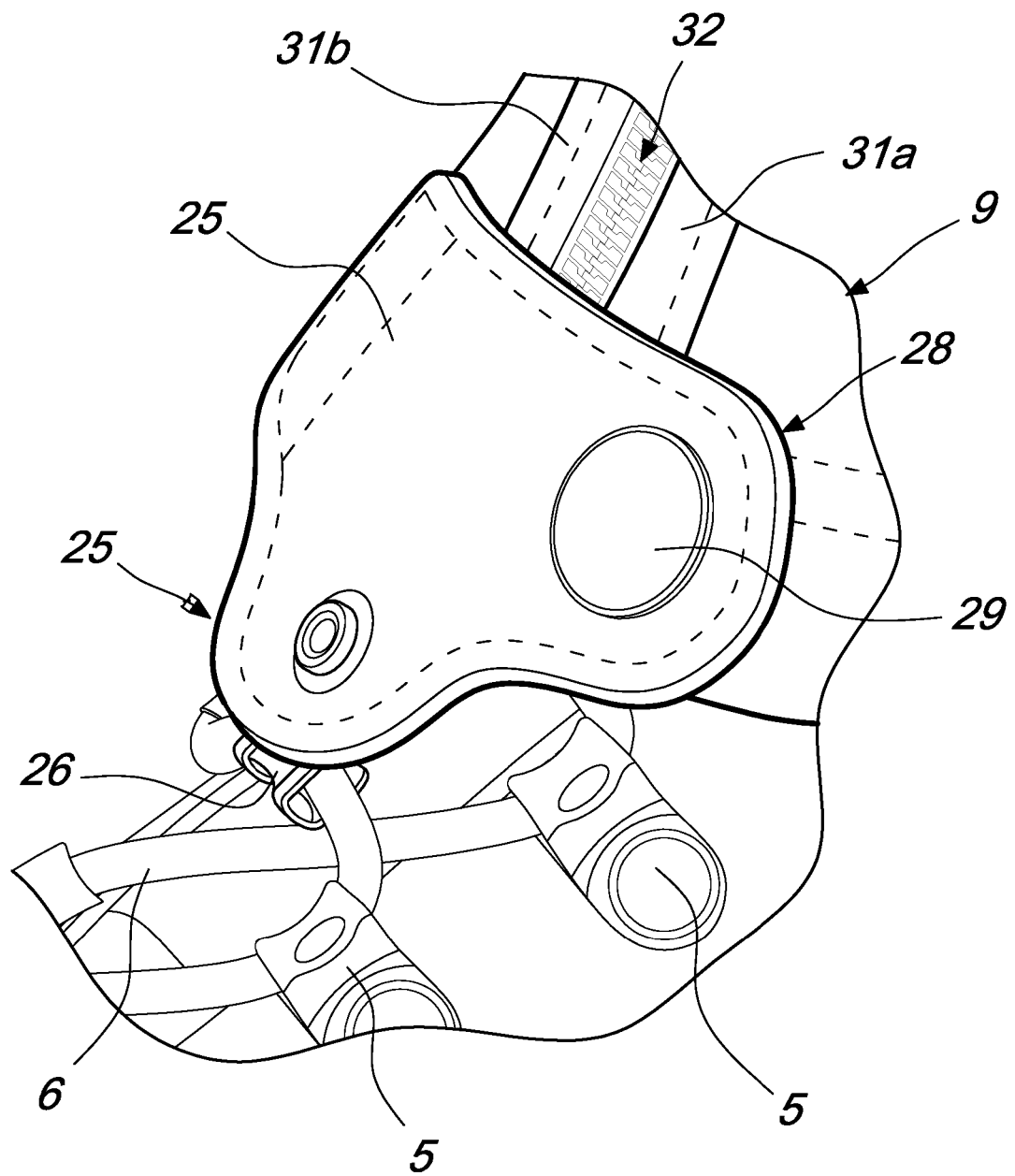
*Fig. 4*



*Fig. 5*



*Fig. 6*



*Fig. 7*

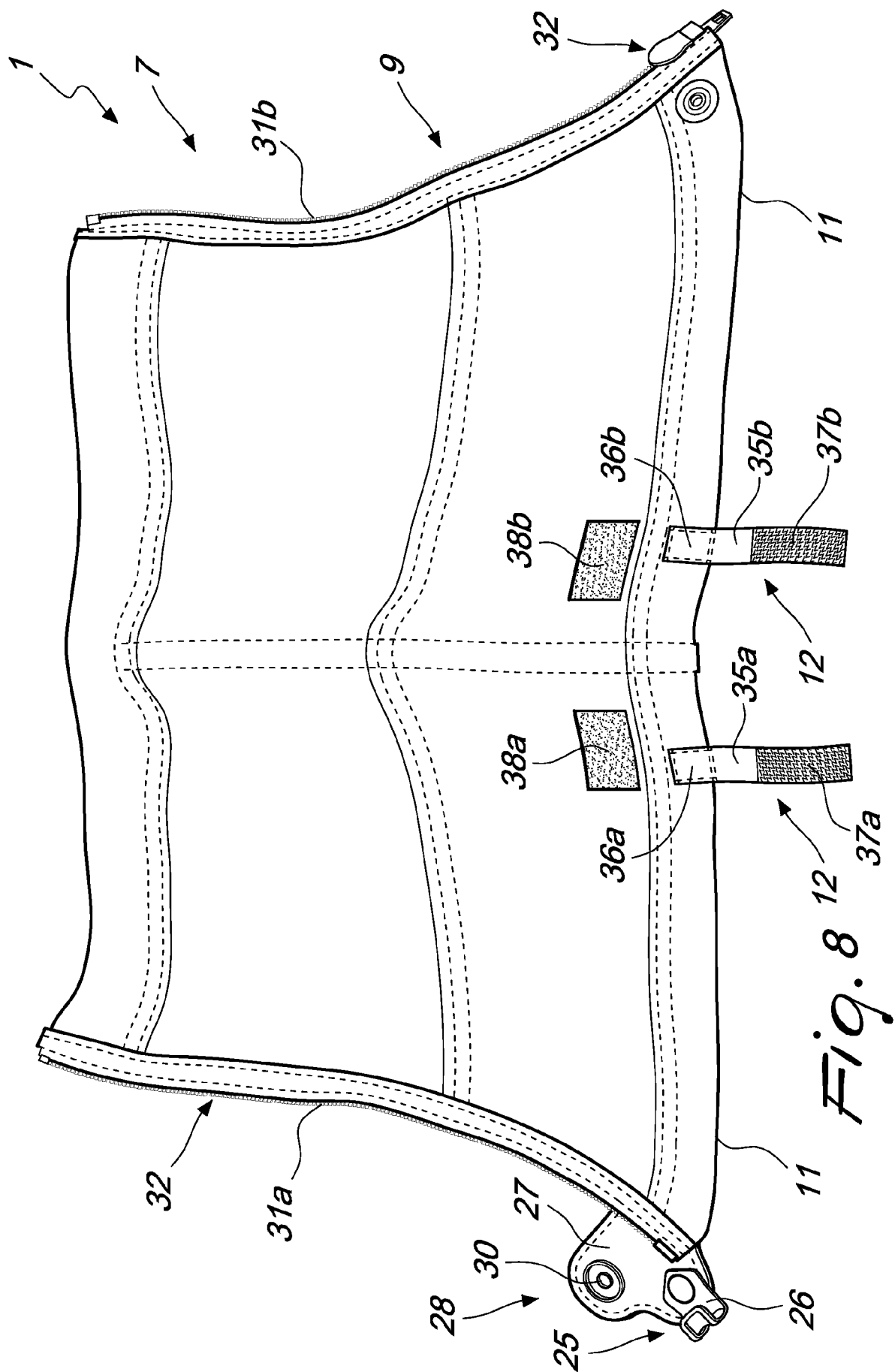


Fig. 8

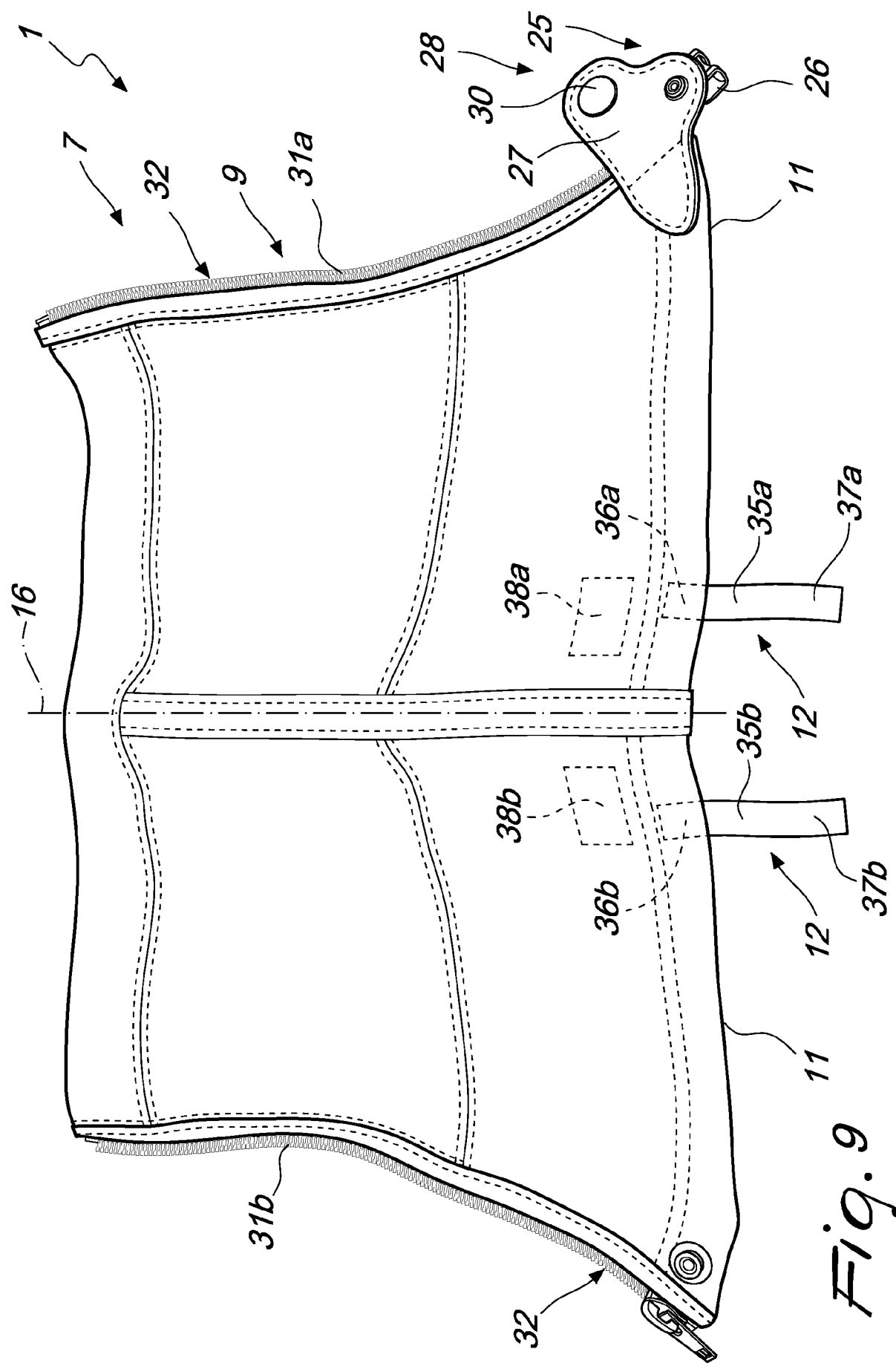


Fig. 9



## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 24 20 1483

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| Category                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages                                                            | Relevant to claim                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC) |
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| The present search report has been drawn up for all claims                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                         |
| Place of search                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                          | Date of completion of the search                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Examiner                                |
| The Hague                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                          | 27 February 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Papatheofrastou, M                      |
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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82

**REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION**

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