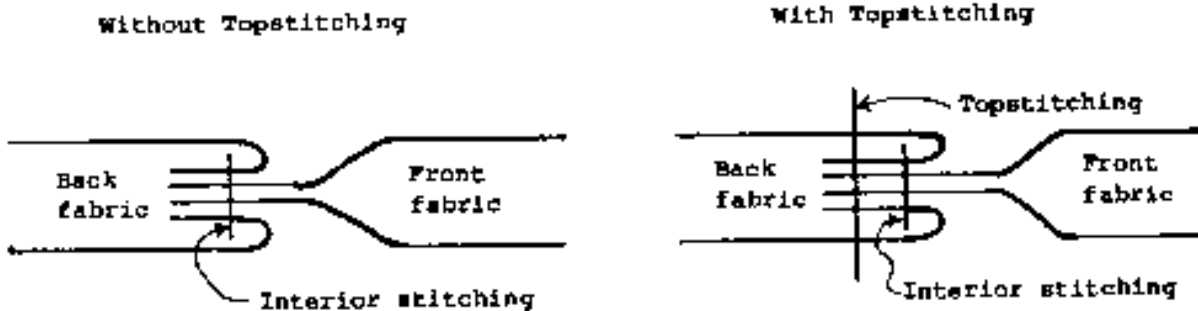


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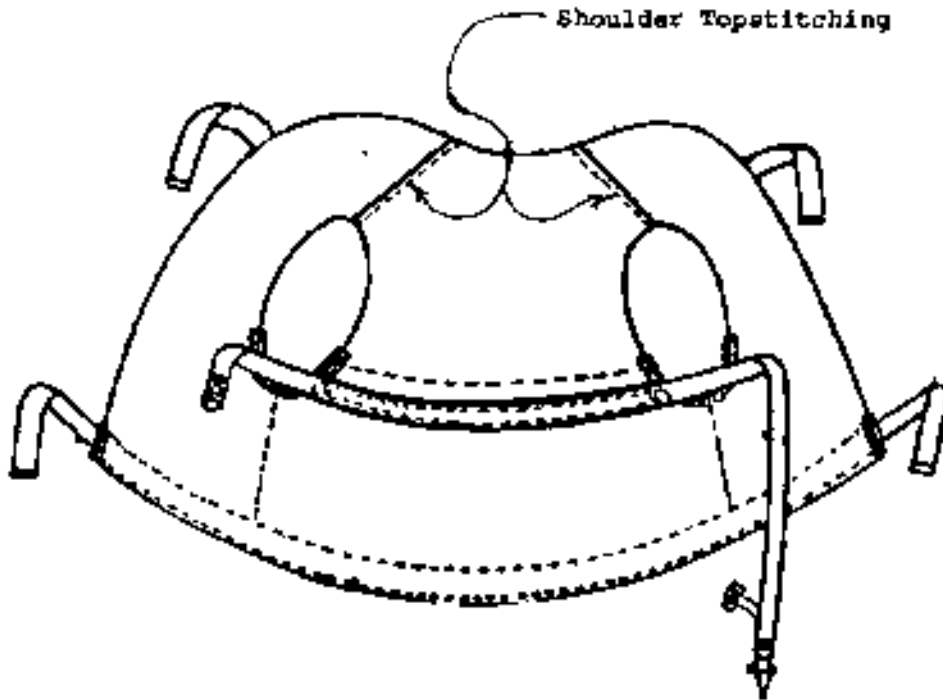
NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 1-84
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Subj: Lack of Topstitching on Some Type I Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) Ref : (a) 46 CFR
160.006-2

1. **PURPOSE.** This Circular informs vessel owners and operators, and Officers in Charge of Marine Inspection about the lack of topstitching on same Coast Guard approved life preservers manufactured by Gladding Corporation.
2. **BACKGROUND.** We have received several failure reports concerning Gladding Corporation (now Paris Southern Corporation) AF 500, Model 3, Type I PFDs, approval number 160.002/78/0. After examining these PFDs, we found that the required topstitching was omitted from the shoulder seams. This severely weakens the shoulder of the device, allowing the shoulder seams to be pulled apart rather easily. To date, the problem has been detected in Lots 9, 10, 16, 17, 24, 25, 28, and 32. Therefore, all Lots initially inspected between approximately September 1980 and March 1982 should be identified as possibly having the defect. Illustrations of the construction of the shoulder seam with and without topstitching are shown below:



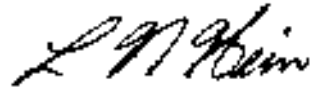
The locations of the seams in question are shown in the following illustration:



3. DISCUSSION. The manufacturer has agreed to repair the devices or provide instructions on how to repair the devices. If a device is returned to them, the manufacturer will add the topstitching and return the device to the owner, free of charge. If the owner wants to repair the devices without returning them to the manufacturer, the owner must notify the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection prior to making the repairs as specified in reference (a). Instructions for making the repair will be provided free by the manufacturer. The manufacturer's address is:

Paris Southern Corporation
P.O. Box 8277, Station A
Greenville, SC 29604

4. ACTION.
 - a. Vessel owners/operators and Coast Guard personnel should closely check any Gladding Corporation (now Paris Southern) AF 500, Model 3, Type I PFDs, approval number 160.002/78/0 manufactured between approximately September 1980 and March 1982 to see if the topstitching has been omitted. If there is no topstitching, the problem should be corrected as discussed in Paragraph 3.
 - b. Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection should normally allow the repairs to be made provided the owner has appropriate equipment and thread and agrees to follow the manufacturer's instructions.



L. N. HEIN
Acting Chief, Office of Merchant Marine Safety

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