

# Fire Extinguisher Discharge at 90 Knots

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In a previous posting we had discussed the in flight fire at Westover and resulting grounding of the C-123 fleet. As aircraft came out of the liquid line replacement maintenance some were still somewhat on edge about the fire possibility. (As a side note I have been unsuccessfully trying to find a picture of the Westover aircraft on fire on final. I saw one many years ago and the fire extended past the left horizontal stabilizer and rudder)

Remember the A-20 fire extinguisher mounted in the cockpit behind the copilot's seat? It was mounted close to the floor just behind the left seat track.

2—24. EMERGENCY AND COMFORT PROVISIONS.  
(See figure 2—13.)

- 3 Hand fire extinguishers
- 13 First-Aid kits
- 2 Emergency hand axes
- 1 Pyrotechnic pistol and 12 star flares
- 1 Water container and cups container
- 2 Relief tubes



I was flying a night local on a cold low visibility night. I don't recall if we did a drop or flew a route but later in the flight we were doing pattern work and had shot a few touch and go

landings. I don't recall who was in the left seat but Ed Stevens was the I P in the right seat. The landing was briefed as another touch and go. Touchdown was uneventful and the aircraft we configured for the "go" portion. At about 90 knots the nose was lifted to rotate when the aforementioned A-20 fire extinguisher fell out of the mounting bracket. It hit just right and the copilot's seat track punctured the canister. The extinguishing agent sprayed to the right, deflected off the copilot's side window and onto Ed Stevens, to include in his eyes. I tried to call out as I grabbed the canister. I couldn't talk as the extinguisher agent was overpowering. I did manage to grab the canister and throw it back into the cargo compartment. At that same instant (although he couldn't see) Ed put both reciprocating engines into full reverse and stopped the takeoff.



Luckily I had stopped at the inflight kitchen, picked up and filled the water jug. Sometimes that requirement was not complied with. I took a rag and soaked it with water for Ed to clear his eyes. The Base Hospital was still in operation and he went up to get his eyes properly flushed and checked out. Gladly he sustained no damage. He later told me that there was no way he was going to let the takeoff continue as a result of the Westover incident. He thought it could have been fuel that was spraying in the cockpit.



Ed Stevens was a highly qualified C-123K I P. I really liked flying with him.



4

