

## Re: STS51L Accident Questions

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In article <113gsnkljvlbp21@corp.supernews.com>,

Pat Flannery <flanner@daktel.com> writes:

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> *James Nicoll wrote:*

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>> *Was the anti-fog device described in \_Glide-Path\_ based on something  
>> someone tried? In the novel, the British try to disperse fog with a gajillion  
>> gallon/minute array of torches. It was a partial success: the fog did lift  
>> but the updrafts were very nearly lethal to the test pilot.*

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> *I'm pretty sure that systems employing fire near runways that have been  
> successfully used to disperse fog near airfields; all one has to do is  
> raise the air temperature by a few degrees to make it disperse; I  
> imagine the soot in the smoke also gives the water vapor something to  
> condense around and makes it precipitate out of the air. There really  
> isn't going to be much of an updraft from that little of a temperature rise.  
> They had two ideas similar to that that were interesting though; one was  
> an huge upward-facing flame-thrower for ships designed to set Luftwaffe  
> aircraft alight like so many Hun moths that had drawn too close to the  
> flame of British civilization. This didn't work; the planes could just  
> fly though the flame.*

In the cae of the flame guns, yes. FIDO (The fog clearer) was a danger. The real solution was GCA, (Talkdown stuff), and ILS.

> *The other one was a real terror and would probably have worked- put  
> perforated pipes offshore at suspected beaches that the Germans might  
> land on in time of invasion, and pump gasoline through them- this rose  
> to the surface and was ignited (by some chemical that had been added to  
> it IIRC), turning the sea into a mass of flames.  
> I'd hate to think what the landings at Normandy would have been like if  
> the Germans had had enough gasoline to implement a scheme like that.  
> Even if the fire itself didn't get you, the burning gasoline would  
> superheat the air while depleting its oxygen.*

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It wouldn't have worked – the wave action would break up the burning oil slick, which would have 2 effects – gaps in the flames, and the burning oil would turn into a mass of small burning oil puddles, which wouldn't receive enough fuel to keep burning.

The real bright thing they came up with was PLUTO. Now that was a harebrained scheme – that actually worked.

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Without data, all you have are opinions