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(54) **Fire extinguishing access port nozzle assembly**

(57) A fire extinguishing access port includes a port and nozzle assembly where the nozzle has a plurality of radial outlets defining a pattern of dispersal for a fire extinguishing agent. According to a presently preferred embodiment, the port and nozzle assembly is dimensioned to be mounted in an existing mounting hole (e. g. a switch mounting hole) of an aircraft electrical panel with the nozzle residing in the rear of the panel and the port residing on the front of the panel. According to the invention, a plurality of different nozzles are provided for different electrical panels, each nozzle having a different pattern of dispersal. A fire extinguisher access port kit according to the invention includes a plurality of thread-

ed nozzles, each with different dispersal patterns, a plurality of threaded ports which mate with the nozzles, and a plurality of different length threaded tubes which mate with the nozzles and the ports. According to the presently preferred embodiment, the nozzles are provided with a plurality of radial slots which deflect the flow of fire extinguishing agent substantially perpendicular to the direction of entry through the port. This provides excellent dispersal of fire extinguishing agent throughout the electrical compartment and also provides two unexpected advantages, prevents foreign objects from passing through the port and potentially causing a short circuit, and eliminates the possibility of blowback.

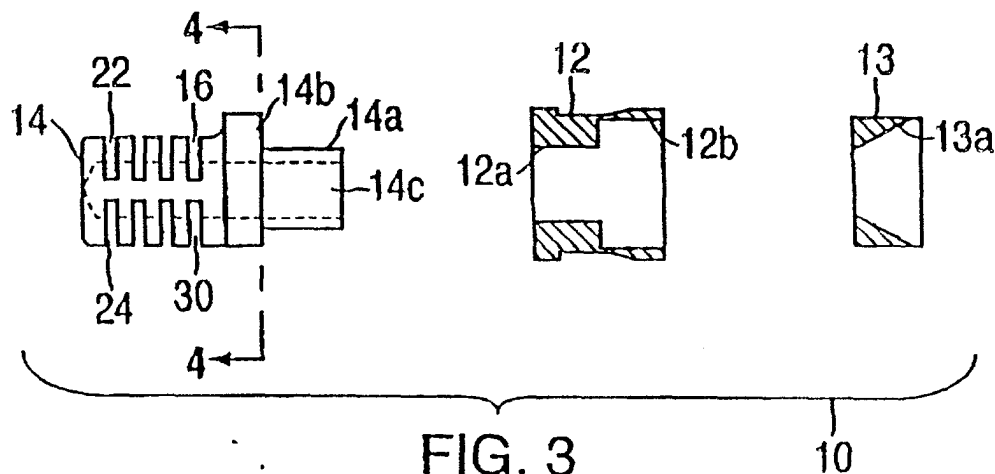


FIG. 3

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Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0001] The invention relates to fire extinguishing equipment. More particularly, the invention relates to a nozzle assembly adapted to be mounted in an aircraft electrical panel so that a fire extinguishing agent can be dispersed behind the panel.

2. State of the Art

[0002] Electrical fires are a well known hazard in aviation. These fires often start behind fuse panels or switch panels. One of the chief difficulties in dealing with such fires is the difficulty in getting access to the space behind the panel.

[0003] Several prior art devices have addressed this problem by providing various kinds of "access ports" through which a fire extinguishing agent may be introduced. These access ports generally include a hole or a pipe with a flapper valve to prevent dirt from entering behind the panel when the port is not in use. The hole or pipe is dimensioned to allow the nozzle of a hand operated fire extinguisher to fit through.

[0004] The state of the art fire access ports have several disadvantages. First, the flapper valves are less than fully effective in preventing foreign objects from entering behind the electrical panel. Second, they only provide for limited dispersion of the fire extinguishing agent. Third, they allow "blowback". Blowback occurs when fire extinguishing agent hits the back wall of an electrical panel and is deflected back out the port into the cockpit. This not only hampers the extinguishing of the fire, it is dangerous to the personnel in the cockpit.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It is therefore an object of the invention to provide a fire extinguishing access port for an aircraft electrical panel.

[0006] It is also an object of the invention to provide a fire extinguishing access port for an aircraft electrical panel which does not permit the passage of foreign objects.

[0007] It is another object of the invention to provide a fire extinguishing access port for an aircraft electrical panel which provides enhanced dispersal of fire extinguishing agent.

[0008] It is yet another object of the invention to provide a fire extinguishing access port for an aircraft electrical panel which prevents blowback.

[0009] In accord with these objects which will be discussed in detail below, the fire extinguishing access port of the present invention includes a port and nozzle assembly where the nozzle has a plurality of radial outlets

defining a pattern of dispersal for a fire extinguishing agent. According to a presently preferred embodiment, the port and nozzle assembly is dimensioned to be mounted in an existing mounting hole (e.g. a switch mounting hole) of an aircraft electrical panel with the nozzle residing in the rear of the panel and the port residing on the front of the panel. According to the invention, a plurality of different nozzles are provided for different electrical panels, each nozzle having a different pattern of dispersal. A fire extinguisher access port kit according to the invention includes a plurality of threaded nozzles, each with different dispersal patterns, a plurality of threaded ports which mate with the nozzles, and a plurality of different length threaded tubes which mate with the nozzles and the ports.

[0010] According to the presently preferred embodiment, the nozzles of the invention are provided with a plurality of radial slots which deflect the flow of fire extinguishing agent substantially perpendicular to the direction of entry through the port. This provides excellent dispersal of fire extinguishing agent throughout the electrical compartment and also provides two unexpected advantages. First, it prevents foreign objects such as paper clips and the like from passing through the port and potentially causing a short circuit. Second, it eliminates the possibility of blowback.

[0011] In an exemplary embodiment, the port and nozzle are machined out of solid aluminum stock and the port is provided with a TEFLON seal. The TEFLON seal is machined from a solid rod and forms a tapered entry to the port so that the nozzle of a fire extinguisher is sealed to the port during use.

[0012] Additional objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon reference to the detailed description taken in conjunction with the provided figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013]

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a first embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of the invention;

Figure 3 is an exploded side elevational view in partial section of the first embodiment of the invention;

Figure 4 is an end view of the nozzle of Figure 3 looking in the direction 4-4 in Figure 3;

Figures 5-7 are side elevational views of extensions tubes for use with the nozzles and ports of the invention; and

Figure 8 is a side elevational view, in part section,

of the invention mounted on an aircraft electrical panel.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0014] Referring now to Figure 1, a fire extinguishing access port 10 according to the present invention includes a port 12 and a nozzle 14. As seen in Figure 1, the nozzle 14 has a plurality of radial outlets 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 defining a substantially 360° pattern of dispersal for a fire extinguishing agent.

[0015] Turning now to Figure 2, a second embodiment of a fire extinguishing access port 110 according to the present invention includes a port 112 and a nozzle 114. As seen in Figure 2, the nozzle 114 has a plurality of radial outlets 116, 118, 120, 122, defining a somewhat less than 90° pattern of dispersal for a fire extinguishing agent.

[0016] According to a presently preferred embodiment, the port and nozzle assemblies 10, 110 are dimensioned to be mounted in an existing mounting hole (e.g. a switch mounting hole) of an aircraft electrical panel (not shown) with the nozzle 14, 114 residing in the rear of the panel and the port 12, 112 residing on the front of the panel. According to the invention, a plurality of different nozzles are provided for different electrical panels, each nozzle having a different pattern of dispersal.

[0017] Referring now to Figure 3, according to a presently preferred first embodiment, the port 12 has a stepped throughbore 12a, 12b, and the smaller diameter portion 12a is threaded. The nozzle 14 has a threaded stem 14a which is separated from the radial outlets 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 by a flange 14b. A terminating bore 14c passes through the stem 14a to the radial outlets 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30. As mentioned above, the port 12 and the nozzle 14 are threaded together through a hole in an electrical panel. According to the preferred embodiment, the large diameter portion 12b of the bore in the port 12 is provided with a TEFLON seal 13 having a tapered throughbore 13a.

[0018] According to an exemplary embodiment of the invention, the port 12 has an exterior diameter of approximately 0.875 inches and an axial length of approximately 0.75 inches. The inner diameter of the threaded part 12a is approximately 0.437 inches and it is provided with a 462-32 2A thread. The inner diameter of the large diameter part 12b is approximately 0.75 inches and the axial depths of parts 12a and 12b are substantially equal. Accordingly, the outer diameter of the TEFLON seal 13 is approximately 0.75 inches and the narrowest part of the tapered bore 13a is approximately 0.375 inches. The nozzle 14 has an overall axial length of approximately 1.5 inches, of which the stem portion 14a occupies approximately 0.5 inches. The overall diameter of the nozzle portion is approximately 0.525 inches with the inner bore 14c being approximately 0.312 inches in

diameter. Each of the slots 22-30 has an axial width of approximately 0.062 inches and is spaced about 0.1 inch from its neighbor. Referring to Figure 4, the flange 14b has a horizontal dimension of approximately 0.525 and a rounded top defined by a circle having a diameter of approximately 0.875 inches centered in the center of the bore 14c. In the exemplary embodiment, described above, the port 12 and nozzle 14 are machined out of solid aluminum stock and the TEFLON 13 seal is machined from a solid TEFLON rod.

[0019] A fire extinguisher access port kit according to the invention includes a plurality of threaded nozzles 14, each with different dispersal patterns, a plurality of threaded ports 12 which mate with the nozzles 14, and a plurality of different length threaded tubes (40, 42, 44, Figs. 5-7) which mate with the nozzles and the ports. As shown for example in Figure 5 a tube 40 has a female threaded end 40a, a male threaded end 40b, and a flange 40c. The tubes 42 shown in Figure 6 and 44 shown in Figure 7 have the same features with similar reference numerals referring to the same features (i.e., female threaded ends 42a, 44a, male threaded end 42b, 44b and flanges 42c and 44c, respectively). The only difference among these tubes is their length. In assembling a fire extinguisher access port using the kit of the invention, one selects a tube of appropriate length and a nozzle having an appropriate dispersion pattern. The length is selected based on the depth of the compartment in which it will be installed. The dispersion pattern is selected based on the location of equipment inside the compartment.

[0020] There have been described and illustrated herein several embodiments of a fire extinguishing access port nozzle assembly. While particular embodiments of the invention have been described, it is not intended that the invention be limited thereto, as it is intended that the invention be as broad in scope as the art will allow and that the specification be read likewise. It will therefore be appreciated by those skilled in the art that yet other modifications could be made to the provided invention without deviating from its spirit and scope as so claimed.

Claims

1. A fire extinguishing access port, comprising:

- a) a port member; and
- b) a nozzle member coupled to said port member,

said port member and said nozzle member defining a first fluid path,

said nozzle member having a plurality of radial outlets, each of said radial outlets defining a fluid path substantially perpendicular to said first fluid path.

2. A fire extinguishing access port according to claim 1, wherein:

said radial outlets define a plurality of fluid paths angularly spaced apart from each other over a space of approximately 90 degrees. 5

3. A fire extinguishing access port according to claim 1, wherein:

said radial outlets define a plurality of fluid paths angularly spaced apart from each other over a space of approximately 180 degrees. 10

4. A fire extinguishing access port according to claim 1, wherein:

said radial outlets define a plurality of fluid paths angularly spaced apart from each other over a space of approximately 360 degrees. 20

5. A fire extinguishing access port according to claim 1, further comprising:

c) a synthetic sealing member located coaxially within said port member. 25

6. A fire extinguishing access port according to claim 5, wherein:

said sealing member is made of TEFLON. 30

7. A fire extinguishing access port according to claim 5, wherein:

said sealing member has a tapered through-bore. 35

8. A fire extinguishing access port according to claim 1, wherein:

said port member and said nozzle member are coupled to each other by threaded engagement. 40

9. A fire extinguishing access port according to claim 8, wherein:

said port member has an axial length of approximately 0.75 inches and said nozzle member has an axial length of approximately 1.5 inches. 45

10. A fire extinguishing access port according to claim 8, further comprising:

c) a tube member having a first end and a second end, said first end adapted to threadably engage said port member, said second end 50

adapted to threadably engage said nozzle member.

11. A fire extinguishing access port kit, comprising:

a) a port member;
b) a first nozzle member adapted to be coupled to said port member,

said first nozzle member defining a first fluid path,

said first nozzle member having a plurality of first radial outlets, each of said first radial outlets defining a fluid path substantially perpendicular to said first fluid path; and

c) a second nozzle member adapted to be coupled to said port member,

said second nozzle member defining a second fluid path,

said second nozzle member having a plurality of second radial outlets, each of said second radial outlets defining a fluid path substantially perpendicular to said second fluid path, wherein

the number of first radial outlets is different than the number of second radial outlets.

12. A fire extinguishing access port kit according to claim 11, wherein:

said first radial outlets define a plurality of fluid paths angularly spaced apart from each other over a space of approximately 90 degrees.

13. A fire extinguishing access port kit according to claim 12, wherein:

said second radial outlets define a plurality of fluid paths angularly spaced apart from each other over a space of approximately 180 degrees.

14. A fire extinguishing access port kit according to claim 11, wherein:

said first radial outlets define a plurality of fluid paths angularly spaced apart from each other over a space of approximately 360 degrees.

15. A fire extinguishing access port kit according to claim 11, further comprising:

d) a synthetic sealing member located coaxially within said port member.

16. A fire extinguishing access port kit according to claim 15, wherein:

said sealing member is made of TEFLON.

17. A fire extinguishing access port kit according to claim 15, wherein:

said sealing member has a tapered through-bore.

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18. A fire extinguishing access port kit according to claim 11, wherein:

said nozzle member are adapted to be coupled to said port member by threaded engagement.

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19. A fire extinguishing access port kit according to claim 18, wherein:

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said port member has an axial length of approximately 0.75 inches and said nozzle members each have an axial length of approximately 1.5 inches.

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20. A fire extinguishing access port kit according to claim 18, further comprising:

d) a tube member having a first end and a second end, said first end adapted to threadably engage said port member, said second end adapted to threadably engage either of said nozzle members.

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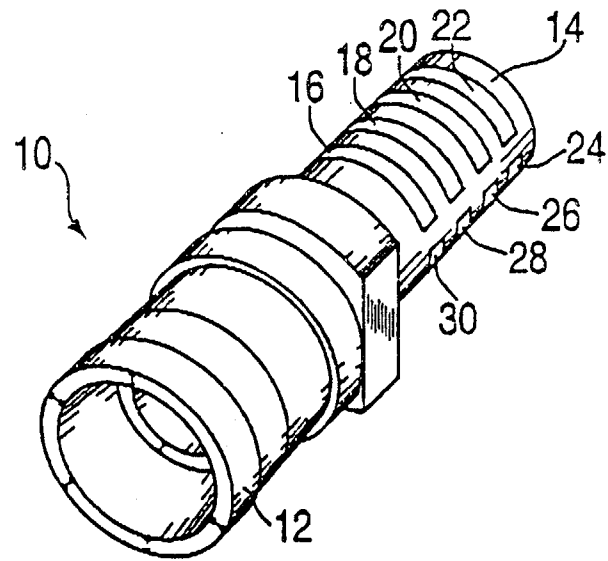


FIG. 1

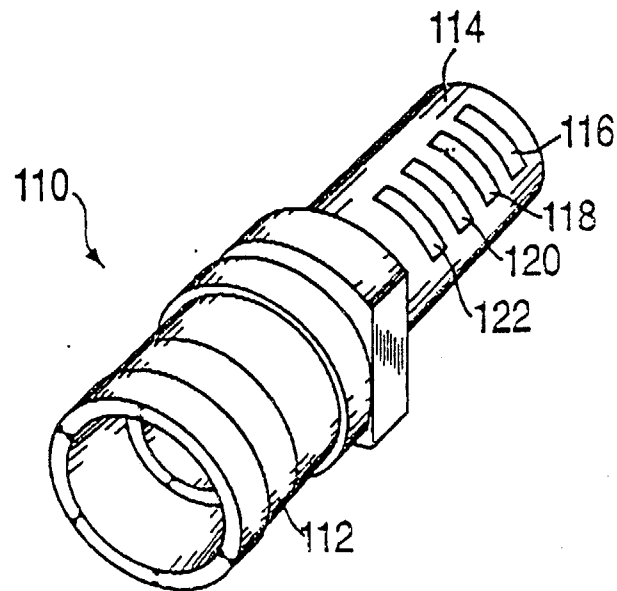


FIG. 2

FIG. 4

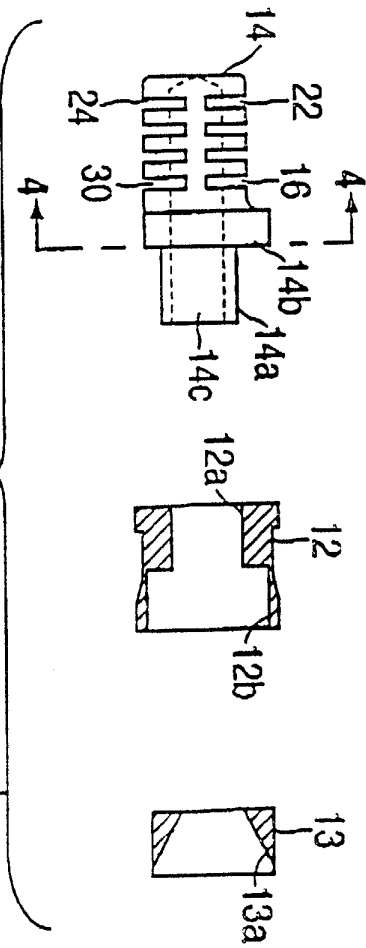
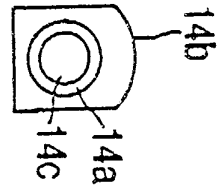


FIG. 3

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FIG. 5

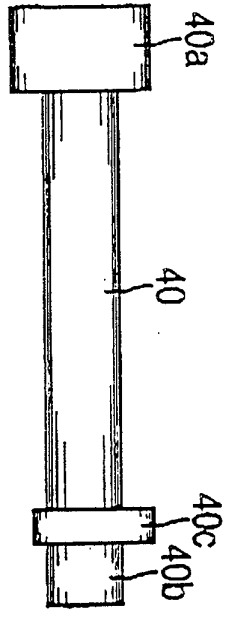


FIG. 6

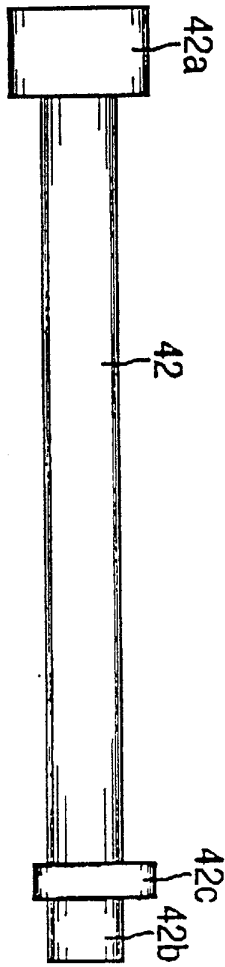
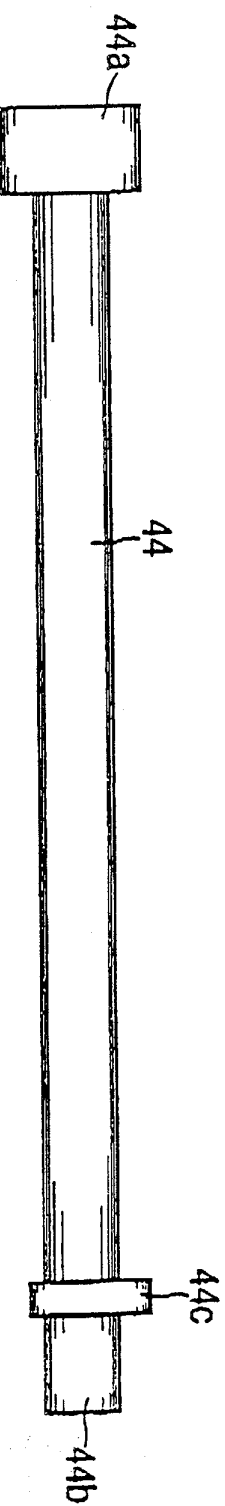


FIG. 7



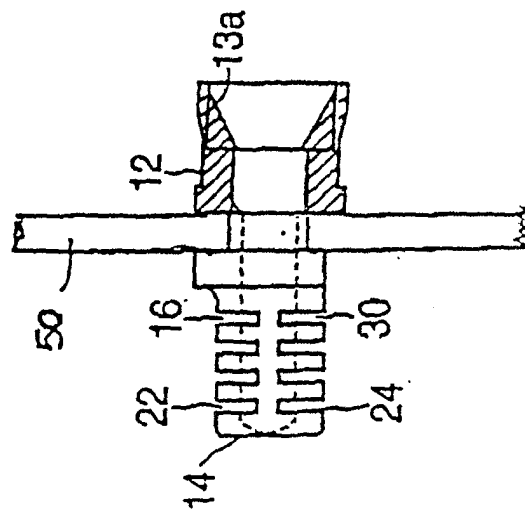


FIG. 8



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 02 25 8256

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CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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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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