

THE DISASTER

US AND USSR WEATHER PHOTOS OF CHALLENGER CATASTROPHE

by Henry W. Brandli (1)

On January 28, 1986, the U.S. space shuttle Challenger took off at 1638 GMT. Seventy-three seconds later, the space shuttle exploded.

The U.S. geostationary weather satellite GOES at 36,000 km took a visual photo of the exhaust trail and the explosive cloud at 1644 GMT (Fig. 1). The wind flow at accident level was 265° at 106 mph.

The Soviet meteor 2-13 polar orbiting space craft at 950 km took a visual photo that showed the explosion cloud at 1712 GMT (Fig. 2) (see arrow).

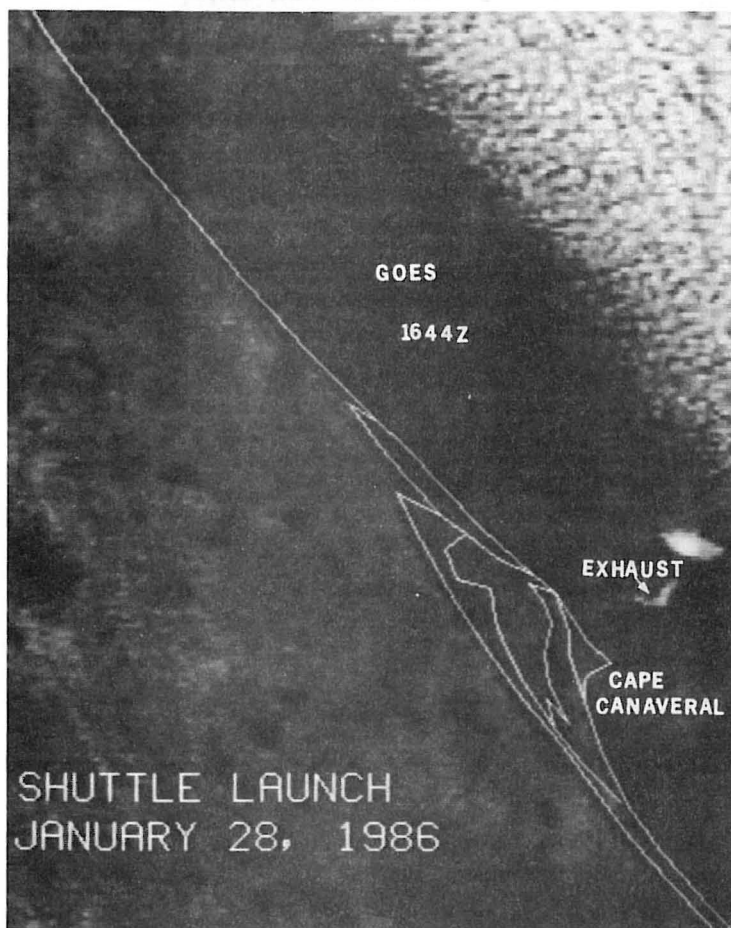


Fig. 1. GOES visible imagery 1644 GMT 28 January 1986.

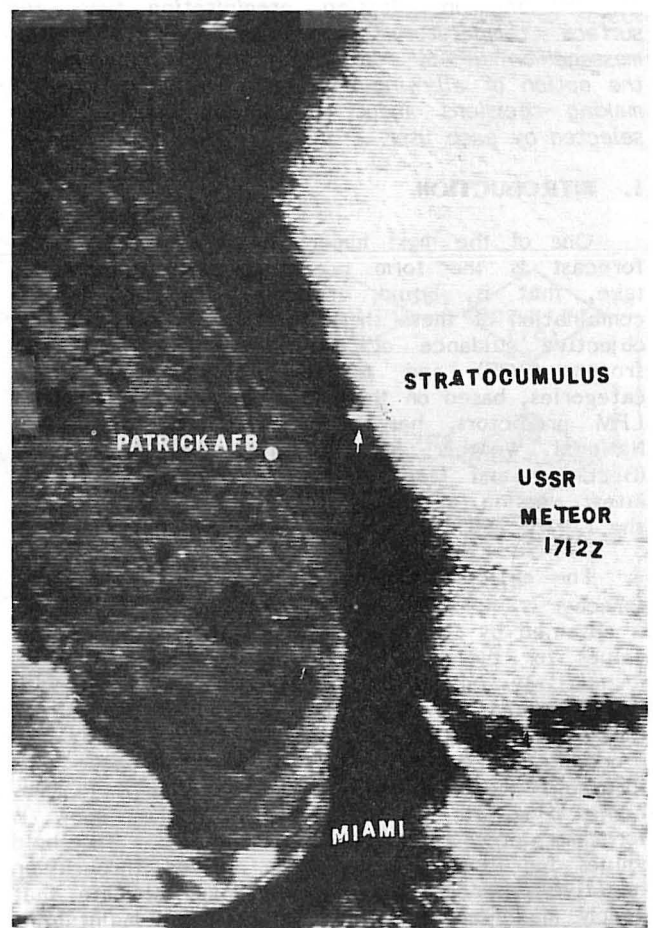


Fig 2. Meteor 2-13 visual APT imagery on 28 January 1986 at 1712 GMT.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Henry W. Brandli is Chairman, NWA Satellite Meteorology Committee.
2. Dave Latsch and G. Zehr furnished Meteor 2-13 imagery.