

- 0. CHALLENGER'S AFTERMATH Story Preface
- 1. EARLY WARNINGS
- 2. AN ACCIDENT ROOTED IN HISTORY
- 3. WARNINGS IGNORED
- 4. LAST-MINUTE PLEAS
- 5. THE FINAL MINUTES
- 6. THE EXPLOSION
- 7. THE LAST WORDS
- 8. THE HORROR OF DESTRUCTION
- 9. THE UNTHINKABLE

10. THE TRANSCRIPTS

11. CHALLENGER'S AFTERMATH

CHALLENGER'S AFTERMATH



Challenger's crew as they appeared on January 9, 1986 during a countdown-training break. Left to right are: Teacher-in-Space payload specialist Sharon Christa McAuliffe; payload specialist Gregory Jarvis; and astronauts Judith A. Resnik, mission specialist; Francis R. (Dick) Scobee, mission commander; Ronald E. McNair, mission specialist; Mike J. Smith, pilot; and Ellison S. Onizuka, mission specialist. Click on the public-domain NASA image for a full-page view.

When the crew families learned what their loved ones had never learned - that Morton Thiokol and NASA both knew about the O-ring design defect - lawsuits were filed. All the cases were settled before the shuttle flew again, with <u>redesigned</u> Solid Rocket Booster joints, in 1988.

<u>The families have moved on</u>, doing the best they can to privately cope with a public disaster that broke the hearts of their fellow citizens. As a memorial to the lost astronauts, <u>Challenger Learning Centers</u> now help hundreds of thousands of students every year to learn real-life challenges and consider careers in science.

In the years since America's Space Transportation Systems - more commonly known as the "space shuttles" - have resumed flights, there were no further disasters until February 1, 2003. Sixteen minutes before it was <u>due</u> to land at the Kennedy Space Station, *Columbia* had a catastrophic <u>failure</u>. All seven members of the crew, plus the ship, were lost.

Despite the disastrous loss of *Columbia*, America's space-shuttle program continued until *Atlantis* landed for the last time on July 21, 2011. The program had lasted thirty years.

Space exploration, however, continues. Stunning pictures from Jupiter and other planets amaze scientists and the public alike. The <u>Hubble space telescope</u>, initially suffering from a design flaw, was <u>repaired</u> and regularly transmits <u>incredible data</u>. Magnificent pictures of vast assemblies of stars are only one small example of its tremendous contribution to the study of space.

But the example of the lost astronauts, who gave everything they had, is incomparable. And the <u>words of Dr.</u> <u>Feynmann</u>, concluding <u>his observations</u> on the *Challenger* disaster, must never be forgotten:

For a successful technology, reality must take precedence over public relations, for nature cannot be fooled.

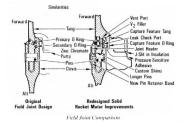
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/CHALLENGER-S-AFTERMATH-Challenger-Disaster

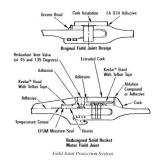
See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/CHALLENGER-S-AFTERMATH-Challenger-Disaster

Media Stream









<u>Challenger Crew - Lost on January 28, 1986</u> Image online via NASA. Public Domain. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Challenger-Crew-Lost-on-January-28-1986

Redesigned Field Joints - Shuttle Solid Rocket Motor

Image and quoted passages from NASA's 1988 <u>NSTS Shuttle Reference Manual</u>. Online, courtesy NASA. PD View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Redesigned-Field-Joints-Shuttle-Solid-Rocket-Motor</u>

Field Joint Comparison

Image online, courtesy NASA. See NASA's 1988 *NSTS Shuttle Reference Manual* for additional information on the shuttle's redesign after *Challenger's* explosion and the failure of mission STS 51-L.

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Challenger Explosion - "Nature Cannot be Fooled"

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