NASA Discovers Why Columbia Exploded





During its investigation into the loss of *Columbia*, which occurred on the 1st of February 2003, NASA's team is stunned to see the results of a test intended to simulate what could have happened when a piece of foam insulation broke loose from the external fuel tank during launch.

This NASA video:

- Explains the background;
- Shows the testing set-up procedures; and
- Includes the moment when the foam struck the wing.

Investigators now realized that *Columbia* had a large hole which caused the Orbiter to explode during re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.

We can tell how surprised the investigators really were, when the piece of foam insulation—traveling at a high rate of speed—struck the wing. Listen for the collective gasp!

Credits:

NASA video, online courtesy NASA.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

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