

STOCKS

Dow Jones
average up 18.81
to 1,556.42.

Prices on C-6
Business on C-5



SPORTS

- Patriot Drug Probe
- Pro Bowlers Arrive
- HPC 5th in NAIA

Section C



Q and A

- John Henry Felix,
GOP Contender, Talks
'86 Campaign Issues

Page A-11

INDEX Vol. 75, No. 28

Astrology	B-4	Dear Abby	B-2
Business	C-5	Editorials	A-10
Stock List	C-6	Obituaries	A-7
Classified	C-9	Sports	C-1
Comics	B-4	Today	B-1
Crossword	B-4	TV Logs	B-2
Donnelly	B-4	Weather	A-2

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Space Shuttle Explodes; All 7 Aboard Are Killed



ON WAY TO PAD—Hawaii-born astronaut Ellison Onizuka, left, schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe, center, and other members of the Challenger crew leave their quarters on their way to the launching pad today. —AP Photo.

UH Regent Tells of Shock, Grief, Tears After Blast

This article was written by June Watanabe with reports from Rod Thompson, Gregg K. Kakesako, Phil Mayer and Helen Altom.

The launch had already been delayed a day. A couple more hours of waiting this morning seemed a small inconvenience compared to the thrill of watching the Challenger finally take off for space at Cape Canaveral.

But Hilo businessman Robert Fujimoto, who is also a member of the University of Hawaii Board of Regents, said the cheers and laughter quickly stopped as more than a thousand people in grandstands near the launch site — including more than 60 from Hawaii — realized something was wrong as they watched the liftoff.

"There was a loud explosion," he said in a telephone interview from his hotel in Orlando, Fla. "All of a sudden there was a big puff of smoke. Then after that you could see the two boosters (rockets) going in a 'V' in opposite directions."

For a moment, Fujimoto said, there was hope that it was something other than the shuttle itself that had exploded.

"Everybody was looking up to see if anything would come down, but all you could see was smoke and the two boost-

ers. But right after that, it came over the P.A. system. Everybody was in shock, crying."

FUJIMOTO SAID the last time Onizuka was in Hawaii, "He told us how the shuttle would turn. So I was curious to see that. As it left the ground, it started to turn and after that, there was all that vapor that follows."

Within seconds, the spacecraft exploded, he said.

The astronauts' wives and husbands watched the launch from inside a building, Fujimoto said. Outside, about 150 to 200 of the space crew's families were gathered on one grandstand, while about a thousand others — including Fujimoto and his family — sat or stood on another grandstand nearby.

Most of the people had been there since about 7 a.m. Florida time. The launch took place about four-and-a-half hours later.

"Right next to us was a group of children with a banner for Christa (McAuliffe, who was chosen to be the first teacher to fly in space)," Fujimoto said. "The whole group, when that thing exploded, started crying. Everybody in the stand knew one of the astronauts — either a friend or a relative, so everyone was deeply shocked when

Turn to Page A-1A, Col. 3

Tragedy Claims McAuliffe and Big Island's Onizuka

By Howard Benedict

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A catastrophic explosion blew apart the space shuttle Challenger 75 seconds after liftoff today, sending schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe and six NASA astronauts, including Hawaii-born Ellison S. Onizuka, to a fiery death in the sky eight miles out from Kennedy Space Center.

Never before in 56 manned space flights had Americans died.

The tragedy defied easy explanation, though a slow-motion replay seemed to show the initial explosion occurred in one of the ship's two peel-away rocket boosters and then the shuttle burst into a fireball high above the Atlantic.

THE EXPLOSION followed an apparently flawless launch, delayed for two hours as officials analyzed the danger from icicles that formed in the frosty Florida morning along the shuttle's new launch pad.

"There were no signs of abnormalities on the screens" as flight controllers monitored Challenger's liftoff and ascent, a source said. The source, at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, said the blast occurred "unexpectedly

Onizuka's Life, A-1A
Hawaii Declares
Day of Mourning,
Teacher's School,
Reaction, Page A-1B

and with absolutely no warning."

Mission Control reported that there had been no indication of any problem with the three shuttle engines, its twin solid boosters or any other system and that the shuttle just suddenly blew apart 10 miles high and 8 miles downrange of Cape Canaveral.

President Reagan watched tape replays in "stunned silence" and postponed the State of the Union message he was to deliver tonight.

HE PLANNED AN evening Oval Office address on the tragedy and dispatched Vice President George Bush to Florida to convey his sympathies to the families of the crew members.

"It's a terrible thing," Reagan told reporters. "I just can't get out of my mind her husband, her children, as well as the families of the others on board."

"Oh, my God, no!" exclaimed first lady Nancy Reagan, who was watching the launch in the White House family quarters.

New Hampshire schoolchildren, drawn to this launch because of the presence of McAuliffe, the first "common citizen" chosen to make a space flight, screamed and fought back tears.

Americans everywhere watch-
Turn to Page A-1A, Col. 1



TRAIL OF SMOKE—Pieces of the shuttle Challenger are fired in different directions as the craft explodes shortly after liftoff today. —AP Photo.

Stunned President Reagan Defends NASA Safety Record

By Terence Hunt

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan watched a television replay of the fiery explosion of the shuttle Challenger in "stunned silence" today but later defended the safety record of America's space program and said "you don't back up and quit" because of tragedy.

The accident, the first in-flight disaster in 56 U.S. manned space missions, prompted Reagan to postpone by one week his State of the Union address that had been scheduled for tonight. Instead, he arranged to address the nation from the Oval Office about the accident.

Reagan said he was plagued

by thoughts of the seven victims of the tragedy and their families. "I just can't rid myself of the thought of the sacrifice and the families that have been watching this, also," he said.

And yet, Reagan said, "The world is a hazardous place, always has been, in pioneering. And we've always known that there are pioneers that give their lives out there on the frontier. And now this has happened."

Noting that millions of people watched the launch and shuttle explosion on television, Reagan said he wanted to "make it plain to them that life does go on and, and you don't back up and quit

some worthwhile endeavor because of tragedy."

DURING HIS 1984 re-election campaign, Reagan initiated the idea of sending a schoolteacher into space, a decision that led to the inclusion of Christa McAuliffe in Challenger's five-man, two-woman crew.

Her husband, Steve, and children, Scott, 9, and Caroline, 6, were on hand at Cape Canaveral and watched the launch.

"I just can't get out of my mind her husband and her children," the president said. "But then, that's true of the families of the others."

He said he did not think it

Turn to Page A-4, Col. 5

Space Shuttle Explodes After Takeoff

Continued from Page One

ed in disbelief as television networks replayed the shuttle explosion.

ASKED WHAT HE would tell the nation's schoolchildren, who watched this flight more closely than others because a teacher was aboard and many special projects were planned for them, Reagan said:

"You have to be out there on the frontier taking risks. Make it plain to them that life must go on."

"I guess we always knew there would be a day like this," said John Glenn, the third American to fly in space and now a senator from Ohio. A congressional investigation was immediately announced, but many lawmakers were quick to express support for the nation's manned space effort.

Lost along with the \$1.2 billion spacecraft were a \$100 million satellite that was to have become an important part of NASA's space-based shuttle communications network and a smaller \$10 million payload that was to have studied Halley's comet.

IT WAS THE second disaster to strike NASA's pioneering space program.

In 1967 — exactly 19 years ago yesterday — astronauts Virgil "Gus" Grissom, Edward White and Roger Chaffee burned to death while preparing for an Apollo flight when a fire destroyed their capsule during a training drill.

Four Soviet cosmonauts have died in space accidents — one in 1967 and three in 1971.

Ironically, in the years since, launches had become so routine that the major TV networks did not show this one live and had to break into regular program-

ming once the dimension of the tragedy was clear.

Cable News Network and many public television stations did broadcast live and viewers saw the routine turn into disaster.

Hours after the accident, officials said no announcement on the fate of the crew would be made until all search-and-rescue efforts were exhausted. But it seemed virtually impossible anyone could survive such a cataclysmic explosion.

THE CREW included McAuliffe and six NASA astronauts: commander Francis R. Scobee, 46, pilot Michael J. Smith, 40; Judith Resnik, 36; Ronald E. McNair, 35; Gregory B. Jarvis, 41; and Onizuka, 39.

The final seconds went like this:

"Go at throttle up," flight directors told Challenger's crew, noting the ship had achieved full engine power. "Roger, go at throttle up," said Smith, the pilot.

Seconds later, an explosion and the devastating space-age fireball.

Not a word was heard from the five men and two women aboard the ship.

Debris cut white swatches through the sky, falling into the Atlantic Ocean.

Spectators, including the parents of McAuliffe and family members of the six astronauts, watched in helpless horror in the frosty fields at Kennedy Space Center.

"Obviously a major malfunction," was the first word from NASA, following seconds of agonized silence.

"We have a report from the flight dynamics officer that the vehicle has exploded. Flight director confirms that," NASA's Steve Nesbitt said.

CHALLENGER FELL in pieces about 18 miles from the launch pad. Debris was so heavy that for several minutes NASA directed rescue craft to stay out of the area.

The launch, scheduled for 9:38 a.m. EST, was delayed two hours while officials analyzed the possibility that foot-long launch-pad icicles might cause problems. But after liftoff, at 11:38 a.m., the NASA commentator, Nesbitt, reported that the systems were normal.

"Three engines running normally," he noted. "Three good fuel cells. Three good APUs (auxiliary power units). Velocity 22,057 feet per second (1,400 miles per hour), altitude 4.3 nautical miles (4.9 statute miles), downrange distance 3 nautical miles (3.4 statute miles).

"Engines throttling up three engines now 104 percent (normal)."

Then the final exchange with pilot Smith. Then the explosion.

NASA CAMERAS were trained on the spaceship. While slow-speed replays did not pinpoint the source of the explosion, from one angle it seemed it might have come at one of the boosters, the two rockets that provide the ship its initial boost to space before peeling away to Earth.

Stressing that he was only speculating, Glenn said, "What I thought I saw was the first flame coming out of the solid (rocket booster)."

After that initial blast, the slow motion showed an explosion of the huge external fuel tank, which carried half a million gallons of supercold, super-volatile liquid oxygen and hydrogen. Challenger, dwarfed by the fuel tank, burst into pieces which rained into the Atlantic for 45 minutes.

The NASA administrator, William R. Graham, was briefing members of Congress on the agency budget and watched the tragedy on television. Two members who had flown recent missions, Sen. Jake Garn and Rep. William Nelson, D-Fla., expressed shock.

GARN SAID HE was unshaken in his belief that "we should proceed with the program and that would include the civilians in the space program as well."

He said he was aware of the dangers in spaceflight but added, "I still feel very strongly that I'm much safer flying an aircraft than any day that I'm on the Capitol Beltway."

The launch today was to be the second of 15 this year — by far the most ambitious schedule in NASA's four-year-old shuttle program. Garn said the obvious — that operations must be frozen for as long as it takes NASA to investigate and understand what went wrong.

Challenger, the second of the agency's four ships to fly, was making its 10th flight, more than any of the other shuttles. Its destruction leaves a fleet of just three shuttles and a program in considerable uncertainty.

NASA HAS RESCUE plans should a shuttle be forced to land in the ocean, but there are no ejection seats that might



SUDDEN FIREBALL—The shuttle Challenger erupts into a miniature sun shortly after liftoff from Cape Canaveral today. —AP Photo.

propel an astronaut from safety in the event of midair disaster.

"Recovery forces were unable to enter the area for several minutes because of continuing falling debris," a Mission Control commentator reported.

Among those who witnessed the explosion were McAuliffe's attorney-husband Steve and their two children, Scott, 9, and Caroline, 6. Also on hand were members of Scott's third grade class from Concord, N.H., displaying a large "Go Christa" banner.

Several cried after the explosion, friends hugged one another and parents quickly cleared children off the viewing bleachers and aboard buses.

McAuliffe's parents, Ed and Grace Corrigan of Framingham, Mass., stood silently during the launch, arm in arm. A NASA

official climbed up rows of bleachers, walked to them and said: "The vehicle has exploded."

MRS. CORRIGAN looked back at him. "The vehicle has exploded?" she asked. He nodded silently and the Corriganes were quickly led away.

McAuliffe, 37, had been selected from 11,146 teacher applicants to be the first to fly in NASA's citizen-in-space program.

All 1,200 students at McAuliffe's Concord High School were cheering the televised launch when a teacher yelled for them to be silent because something appeared to be wrong.

The House of Representatives interrupted its session at the news and the chaplain delivered a prayer for the astronauts. The House then adjourned.

The ship rose spectacularly off

a brand new launch pad at 11:38 a.m. EST, after a series of weather and technical delays, and was climbing smoothly trailing a 700-foot pillar of fire when the explosion hit.

A NASA voice said, "Vehicle has exploded. . . . We are awaiting word from any recovery forces downrange."

MISSION CONTROL said parts of the spacecraft fell at 28.64 north latitude and 80.28 degrees west longitude, just a few miles off Cape Canaveral.

Ships and helicopters raced to the area and the control center said paramedics had jumped into the water.

Half an hour after the explosion, a wisp of white smoke, blown by upper winds, still marked the path of the shuttle's wreckage.

Onizuka Was First Asian-American to Travel in Space

By Jeanne Ambrose
Star-Bulletin Writer

Ellison Shoji Onizuka, who died today in the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger, was Hawaii's first astronaut and the nation's first Asian-American in space.

He achieved what he called a "dream come true" a year ago when he became a crew member aboard the shuttle Discovery that carried a secret payload for the U.S. Defense Department.

The dream ended in tragedy today during Onizuka's second space flight. His wife, children, mother, brother and two sisters watched at Cape Canaveral as the Challenger exploded moments after liftoff.

Onizuka, 39, was an Air Force lieutenant colonel. He and his family — wife Lorna and daughters, Janelle, 16, and Darien, 9 — lived in Houston.

Onizuka was born in Kealahou, where his parents lived on a coffee farm. As a youngster, he picked coffee during school vacations scheduled around harvest time.

He first started dreaming about space flight when he was a seventh-grade student called "Elli" at Honokohau Elementary School in Kona.

"I couldn't talk about it at the time because nobody really knew what space was," he told a group of Big Island youngsters last year. "Monkeys, not men, were being launched into orbit then."

In 1978, NASA selected Onizuka to become an astronaut. Seven years later, in January 1985, he flew his first mission aboard the space shuttle Discovery. He was considered the flight's trouble-shooter.

TWO MONTHS after that flight, Onizuka returned to Hawaii on an official NASA visit that included trips to Kauai, Maui, Oahu and the Big Island.

During that visit he called the shuttle craft "the most sophisticated spaceship ever to orbit this Earth." While in space he saw "no lines out there, no divisions separating countries. We had the opportunity to see the Earth as one," he said. "Hawaii is even more beautiful from space than it is when seen from a plane or a ship. We saw our Earth as very fragile, certainly something to be protected."

He was welcomed to his native Kona with a parade and a testimonial dinner. He visited several Big Island schools where students were amazed when he told them the shuttle traveled so fast he went from Hawaii to Los Angeles in eight minutes.

While in Hawaii, he also visited the Pacific Missile Range Facility at Barking Sands on Kauai. He was honored by the state Legisla-

ture and Gov. George Ariyoshi. Mayor Frank Fasi proclaimed April 11 as "Ellison Onizuka Day."

ONIZUKA was graduated in 1964 from Konawaena High School on the Big Island and returned there in 1980 as commencement speaker. As a high school student, he served as president of the 4-H Club Federation of Hawaii. He also became an Eagle Scout.

Although Onizuka briefly considered a career as a farmer, he eventually earned a master's degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado. He had received his bachelor's degree there in 1969.

That same year he married Lorna Yoshida in Denver. Although she grew up in Naalehu, a 90-minute drive from Onizuka's Kona home, they met for the first time in Colorado. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert S. Yoshida, still live in Naalehu.

Onizuka entered active duty with the Air Force in 1970 and participated in flight test programs for a variety of aircraft at McClellan Air Force Base, Calif.

He attended test pilot school at Edwards Air Force Base. By the time Onizuka was chosen to join NASA's astronaut training program in 1978, he had eight years of experience as a flight test engineer in 43 types of airplanes. He also earned the Air Force Commendation Medal and its Meritorious Service Medal, Organizational Excellence Award, Outstanding Unit Award and the National Defense Service Medal.

A PILOT WITH more than 1,600 hours flying time to his credit, he overcame staggering odds when he was selected to become an astronaut. When he applied to the program, there were nearly 8,100 military and civilian experts seeking 20 mission-specialist slots.

As a NASA representative, he went to Japan last year to discuss joint U.S.-Japan space flights with the head of that country's Science and Technology Agency.

Onizuka was one of four children of Mitsue and Masamitsu Onizuka, whose parents came to Hawaii as immigrant sugar workers from Japan. Masamitsu Onizuka died in 1968.

Mitsue Onizuka, 72, still operates the Onizuka store near Honaunau by the slopes of Mount Hualalai on the Kona Coast.

Onizuka also is survived by two sisters, Mrs. George (Shirley) Matsuo and Mrs. John (Norma) Sakamoto; and a brother, Claude.

Onizuka and the six other astronauts will be honored in a memorial service tomorrow at 12:05 p.m. in St. Andrew's Cathedral. Dean Hollinshead Knight will conduct the 45-minute service.

UH Regent Tells of Shock, Grief, Tears at Cape Canaveral Following Explosion

Continued from Page One
(the announcement) came over the P.A.

He said family members were immediately whisked away by authorities. Shortly afterwards, the other viewers were asked to board the buses that had brought them to the launch site.

FUJIMOTO, LATE this morning, said he was not able to see or talk to any member of the Onizuka family who was at the launch, including his mother, wife, two daughters, brother and two sisters.

Fujimoto said he last talked to Ellison in December. At that time, "he requested that I send him something to take into orbit."

Fujimoto obliged with a UH banner and a Regents Medal. On his first mission last January, the Big Island-born Onizuka carried some Kona coffee and macadamia nuts into space.

Onizuka was the local boy who made good.

Family and friends remember him as a soft-spoken man who was aware of the dangers of space travel but who felt the challenge was worth the risks.

"We're all just shocked and petrified," Fujimoto's son, Mike, said in a telephone interview from Hilo this morning. "My uncle Fred and his wife were close to the Onizuka family. In fact, Fred was the one who organized the trip for about 60 people (from the Big Island) to watch the launch."

Also at Cape Canaveral this morning was Hawaii teacher Arthur Kimura of McKinley High School. He and Joseph



Robert Fujimoto

"Everybody was in shock, crying."

Ciotti of St. Louis High were the state's nominees for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Teacher in Space Project. Ciotti also had gone to Florida, but returned to the Islands Sunday.

BOTH TEACHERS were able to shake hands with Hawaii's first astronaut at a Board of Education meeting in Honolulu shortly after their selection was announced last April.

Onizuka's sister-in-law, Linda, said she was "shocked" when she heard about the shuttle explosion. Her husband, Claude, is Ellison's younger brother and among those who were in Florida.

She said she last talked to Ellison about two weeks ago; they had discussed in passing the dangers of space flight.

But he felt "the challenge was greater than the risk," she recalled calmly this morning in an interview from her Kealahou home.

He remembered more clearly his pride in being in the space program. "To be in the space program is an honor," he told her following his last mission, she said. "He was just happy to be in the program."

"On yes, he was aware of the danger," said Onizuka's childhood friend Gary Oura from his home on Maui. Oura and his family were watching the live broadcast of the ill-fated launch.

"MY CHILDREN are sitting watching TV, praying for him."

"It's not all glamour," Oura said Onizuka told him once. "There's a lot of work and certain dangers. But he accepted the dangers," Oura said. "He had a goal and he reached his goal."

Oura said he "would always call before a flight and tell him to take care."

But although he was aware of the dangers, Onizuka was never one to bring the topic up, Oura said. Whenever Onizuka returned to Hawaii, "We were so happy to see each other, we didn't want to talk about dark moods."

Onizuka couldn't talk about the military shuttle mission he went on, but he talked a lot about working with the teachers who were candidates for the shuttle flight.

"He worked a lot with the teachers. He worked well with children," Oura said. "We were so proud of him."

Another childhood friend,

Wayne Morimoto, of Kealahou, learned about the explosion in a telephone call from Oura.

Morimoto couldn't remember Onizuka talking about the dangers of his work. "He was always happy-go-lucky. He was never afraid of anything."

ONIZUKA TALKED about his earlier training as a jet pilot, Morimoto said. He described it as a rigid program of hard work, but nothing to be afraid of.

"When you're a jet pilot, you're not afraid of anything," he said.

While some of Onizuka's friends were able to express their feelings, emotions engulfed others.

Stanley Oka of Kailua-Kona began to recall the kind of person his friend was, then his emotions forced him to stop. "I just don't want to talk about it right now," he said.

Onizuka's aunt, May Onizuka of Honolulu, said she had been watching television since 6 this morning in anticipation of the lift-off.

Her eldest son, Eric, his wife, Cindy, and their four children were among a large group who flew to Florida last Monday to watch Onizuka's second space take-off.

Mrs. Onizuka, composed until then, broke into tears when asked what her reaction was when she realized what had happened just a half hour before.

It looked like the end, she said, although "some say they saw a parachute coming out. They saw one parachute."

"But with that big blast and explosion, what can you expect?"