



Debris from Space Shuttle Columbia streaked across the sky yesterday over Tyler, Texas. The shuttle broke apart as it re-entered the atmosphere at 12,500 mph, 16 minutes before it was scheduled to land in Florida.

# 'LOST'

## Columbia explodes, killing 7 astronauts



Kalpana Chawla

### Bush consoles a grieving nation

By Joseph Curl  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A somber President Bush yesterday sought to soothe a nation's psyche already battered by escalating world tensions and a U.S. economy in free fall.

"Our entire nation grieves with you," the president assured the families of the seven astronauts who perished aboard Space Shuttle Columbia, which disintegrated in meteoric streaks 207,135 feet over Texas.

"The cause in which they died will continue," Mr. Bush said. "Mankind is led into the darkness beyond our world by the inspiration of discovery and the longing to understand. Our journey into space will go on."

While Mr. Bush spoke calmly in his televised remarks — his brow often furrowed, his voice at times no more than a whisper — his eyes

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David M. Brown

### Brown's parents recall can-do son

By H.J. Brier  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

WASHINGTON, Va. — Paul and Dorothy Brown were anxiously watching TV reports yesterday when they received a phone call telling them that NASA had lost contact with the Space Shuttle Columbia.

"We thought it was just one little hitch," Mrs. Brown said.

"They lost touch with the shuttle. I think this is serious," Paul Brown, a retired Arlington County circuit judge, recalled thinking.

Their son Navy Capt. David M. Brown was a mission specialist onboard.

With tear-filled eyes but steady voices, the Browns expressed parental pride as they told re-

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Laurel B. Clark



Ilan Ramon

President Bush's remarks to the nation at 2:04 p.m. yesterday:

My fellow Americans, this day has brought terrible news and great sadness to our country. At 9 this morning, Mission Control in Houston lost contact with our space shuttle, Columbia. A short time later, debris was seen falling from the skies above Texas. The Columbia is lost. There are no survivors.

On board was a crew of seven: Col. Rick Husband, Lt. Col. Michael Anderson, Comm. Laurel Clark, Capt. David Brown, Comm. William McCool, Dr. Kalpana Chawla and Ilan Ramon, a colonel in the Israeli air force. These men and women as-

### 'They had a high and noble purpose'

sumed great risk in this service to all humanity.

In an age when spaceflight has come to seem almost routine, it is easy to overlook the dangers of travel by rocket and the difficulties of navigating the fierce outer atmosphere of the Earth. These astronauts knew the dangers and they faced them willingly, knowing they had a high and noble purpose in life.

Because of their courage and daring and idealism, we will miss them all the more. All Americans today are thinking,

as well, of the families of these men and women who have been given this sudden shock and grief. You're not alone. Our entire nation grieves with you. And those you loved will always have the respect and gratitude of this country.

The cause in which they died will continue. Mankind is led into the darkness beyond our world by the inspiration of discovery and the longing to understand. Our journey into space will go on.

In the skies today, we saw destruction and tragedy. Yet farther

By Frank J. Murray  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Space Shuttle Columbia, returning from microgravity research in outer space, exploded yesterday morning 39 miles above Texas and disintegrated, killing all seven astronauts aboard.

"The Columbia is lost. There are no survivors," President Bush said in a short address to the nation after the unexplained explosion brought him rushing back to the White House from Camp David.

There had been no hint of trouble from the crew, whose last radio transmission was, "Roger. Uh, huh . . ." to a controller in Houston who asked that a message be repeated.

Only static was heard after that transmission at 9 a.m. EST, 16 minutes before Columbia was scheduled to land at Kennedy Space Center near Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Mr. Bush telephoned to console astronauts' grieving families before they were escorted from Florida to National Aeronautics and Space Administration hide-aways in Houston.

The president then assured the nation shortly after 2:04 p.m. that manned space exploration will continue despite the fact that NASA said the three shuttles left in the agency's fleet will not fly again until it knows what caused yesterday's disaster.

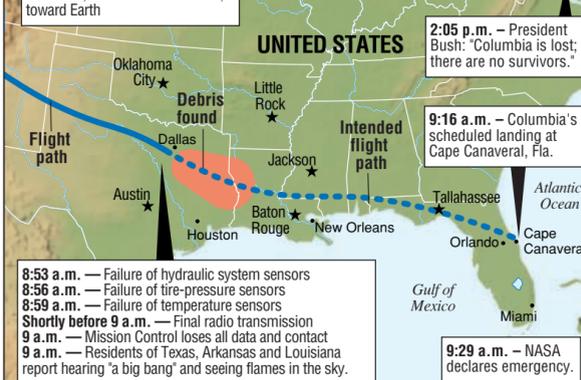
"The cause in which they died will continue. . . . Our journey into space will go on," Mr. Bush said of the first fatal accident in the U.S. space program involving a spacecraft returning to Earth.

Flags were lowered to half-staff in the United States and in Israel to mourn the crew of five men and two women, which included a native of India and an Israeli war hero who was his nation's first astronaut.

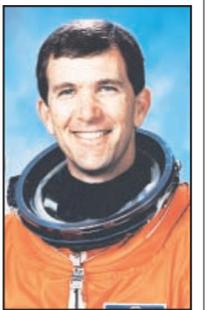
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### SHUTTLE'S FINAL RE-ENTRY

Columbia was traveling 12,500 miles an hour, 18 times the speed of sound, as it descended through the atmosphere, 38 miles over north-central Texas.



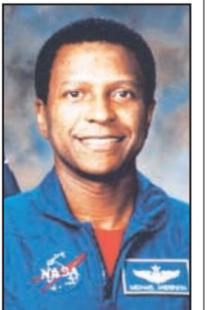
Mourning a son: Paul and Dorothy Brown, parents of Columbia mission specialist Capt. David M. Brown, said their son's death is "going to hit later."



Commander Rick D. Husband



Pilot William C. McCool



Payload commander Michael P. Anderson

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