

**Docket No. SA- 516**

**Exhibit No. 5-B**

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**

**Washington D.C.**

**Attachments**

**Meteorological Factual Report  
[DCA96MA070]  
(46 Pages)**

















STATION WEATHER OBSERVATIONS  
 40° 48' N    73° 06' W    KISS    ARSS ISO NY

LST  
 8

TIME	TYPE	WIND	WIND DIR	WIND GUST	TEMP	DEW	PRES	SEA	ICE	VIS	CLOUDS		WEATHER		CORRECTION	REMARKS	
											HT	AMOUNT	HT	AMOUNT			
M 0150	20006				7												2976.05
M 0150	20008				6												2976.05
M 0200	20009				5												2976.05
M 0250	20009				4												2976.05
M 0300	20009				4												2976.05
M 0350	20009				4												2976.05
M 0400	20009				4												2976.05
M 0450	20009				5												2976.05
M 0500	20009				4												2976.05
M 0550	20009				4												2976.05
M 0600	20009				4												2976.05
M 0650	20009				4												2976.05
M 0700	20009				5												2976.05
M 0750	20009				4												2976.05
M 0800	20009				4												2976.05
M 0850	20009				4												2976.05
M 0900	20009				4												2976.05
M 0950	20009				4												2976.05
M 1000	20009				4												2976.05
M 1050	20009				4												2976.05
M 1100	20009				4												2976.05
M 1150	20009				4												2976.05
M 1200	20009				4												2976.05
M 1250	20009				4												2976.05
M 1345	20011				8												2976.05
M 1445	20018				8												2976.05
M 1550	20017				8												2976.05
M 1650	20018				8												2976.05
M 1700	20018				8												2976.05
M 1850	20018				8												2976.05
M 1950	20018				8												2976.05
M 2050	20018				8												2976.05
M 2150	20018				8												2976.05
M 2350	20018				8												2976.05
M 2550	20018				8												2976.05

TIME	TYPE	WIND	WIND DIR	WIND GUST	TEMP	DEW	PRES	SEA	ICE	VIS	CLOUDS	WEATHER	CORRECTION	REMARKS
M 0050	0	0	0	0	22.9	22.5								
M 0150	0	0	0	0	24.9	24.5								
M 0250	0	0	0	0	23.4	23.0								
M 0350	0	0	0	0	23.5	23.0								
M 0450	0	0	0	0	23.8	23.0								
M 0550	0	0	0	0	23.8	23.0								

REMARKS				CORRECTIONS			
WIND DIR	WIND GUST	TEMP	DEW	PRES	SEA	ICE	VIS
HZ	RL						

WIND DIR: HZ    WIND GUST: RL

SURFACE WEATHER OBSERVATIONS  
(CONTINUED)

STATION INFORMATION				OBSERVATION TIME				COORDINATES				OBSERVATION DATE			
STATION ID	NAME	TIME	ZONE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE	ALTITUDE	TIME	MONTH	DAY	YEAR	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE	ALTITUDE	DATE	
M 0050	BRK 050	000	Z	73° 06' W	40° 48' N	18	07	1949	18	07	96	KIST	AFCSS	FELIP NEW YORK	
M 0150	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 0250	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 0350	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 0450	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 0550	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 0650	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 0750	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 0850	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 0950	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1050	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1150	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1250	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1350	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1450	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1548	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1648	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1750	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1850	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 1950	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2050	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2150	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2250	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2350	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2450	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2550	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2650	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2750	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2850	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 2950	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3050	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3150	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3250	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3350	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3450	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3550	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3650	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3750	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3850	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 3950	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4050	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4150	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4250	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4350	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4450	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4550	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4650	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4750	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4850	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 4950	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5050	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5150	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5250	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5350	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5450	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5550	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5650	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5750	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5850	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 5950	BRK 050	000	Z												
M 6050	BRK 050	000	Z												

1949

10

SURFACE WEATHER OBSERVATIONS		STATION DATA				OBSERVATION TIME			OBSERVATIONS																													
NO.	TYPE	TIME	HEAVEN	TEMP	WIND	MOON	SEA	STATE	NO.	TYPE	TIME	HEAVEN	TEMP	WIND	MOON	SEA	STATE	NO.	TYPE	TIME	HEAVEN	TEMP	WIND	MOON	SEA	STATE												
M 1950		220	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1951		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1952		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1953		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1954		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1955		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1956		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1957		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1958		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1959		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										
M 1960		200	000	22	00	000	1	17	17	504	910	100																										

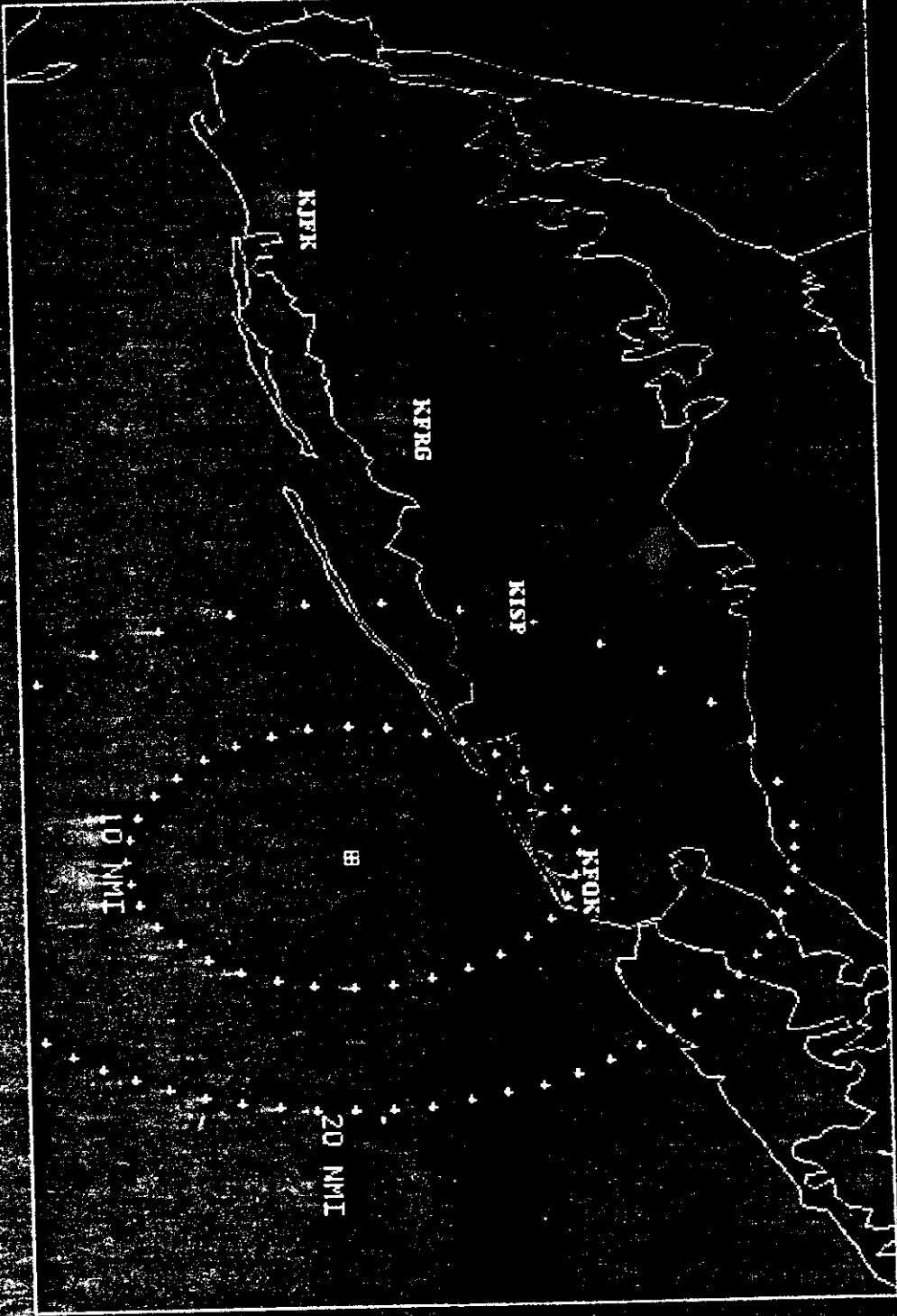
WESTHAMPTON BEACH  
 Sails the radio's express, tower NY

RECHECK - CLOCK CORRECT TO NEAREST MINUTE AT 10:51Z  
 (PURVISERS WP-1-100 - PREVIOUS VERSIONS OBSOLETE)  
 U.S. GOVT PRINTING OFFICE: 1969 O-410-280-46071





1



2. METERS



13

UPTON N.Y.

STATION: 72501 DAY/TIME: 96200 000000 LAT/LONG: 408500 728500

°C °C

True m/sec<sup>-1</sup> meters

LEVEL	TEMP	DEW PT	DIR	SPEED	HEIGHT
1015.0	27.8	20.8	240.0	2.5	20.0
1000.0	27.2	18.2	255.0	4.6	152.3
982.9	26.1	16.9	270.0	6.6	304.0
949.4	23.9	14.2	280.0	7.7	609.0
925.0	22.2	12.2	285.0	8.7	837.5
916.8	21.5	11.9	285.0	9.2	914.0
884.9	18.6	10.7	290.0	9.7	1219.0
850.0	15.4	9.4	305.0	10.2	1564.9
823.8	13.5	8.0	310.0	10.8	1829.0
794.5	11.3	6.3	315.0	9.7	2134.0
793.0	11.2	6.2	315.3	9.6	2150.4
766.0	10.3	-1.4	320.0	8.2	2439.0
757.0	10.0	-4.0	323.3	7.7	2538.0
748.0	9.2	1.2	326.5	7.2	2637.3
738.5	8.4	1.7	330.0	6.6	2743.0
723.0	7.2	2.4	332.9	6.3	2918.6
711.7	6.3	0.9	335.0	6.1	3048.0
700.0	5.4	-0.6	325.0	6.1	3184.2
699.0	5.4	-0.6	324.7	6.1	3196.0
686.0	5.2	-12.8	320.1	6.1	3349.5
685.7	5.2	-12.9	320.0	6.1	3353.0
676.0	4.4	-16.6	310.5	6.9	3469.2
660.4	3.3	-17.0	295.0	8.2	3658.0
636.0	1.5	-17.6	290.0	8.7	3963.0
634.0	1.4	-17.6	290.8	8.8	3988.5
612.3	0.8	-20.4	300.0	9.7	4268.0
586.0	0.0	-24.0	302.9	10.9	4620.7
567.3	-1.9	-23.0	305.0	11.8	4878.0
545.9	-4.2	-21.8	315.0	15.9	5182.0
530.0	-5.9	-20.9	315.0	17.1	5416.5
500.0	-9.3	-28.3	315.0	19.5	5870.1
485.5	-10.4	-30.2	310.0	20.0	6097.0
466.6	-11.8	-32.7	305.0	20.5	6402.0
465.0	-11.9	-32.9	304.8	20.5	6428.6
400.0	-22.5	-35.5	295.0	20.5	7558.2
396.5	-23.0	-36.0	295.0	20.5	7621.0
363.9	-27.9	-40.6	295.0	20.5	8231.0
319.9	-35.2	-47.5	305.0	20.0	9146.0
306.5	-37.7	-49.8	315.0	19.0	9451.0
300.0	-38.9	-50.9	315.0	19.0	9602.3
286.0	-41.9	-51.9	300.8	18.6	9928.2
280.4	-42.7	-52.9	295.0	18.5	10060.0
256.0	-46.5	-57.3	280.0	21.0	10670.0
250.0	-47.5	-58.5	280.0	21.6	10828.8
200.0	-58.1	-67.1	310.0	24.6	12269.6
182.0	-56.5	-65.5	313.6	29.0	12866.1
175.1	-57.2	-66.2	315.0	30.8	13109.0
151.4	-59.9	-68.9	300.0	25.7	14024.0
150.0	-60.1	-69.1	300.0	25.7	14083.4
133.0	-61.9	-70.9	312.9	23.4	14831.2
124.5	-60.8	-69.8	320.0	22.1	15243.0
118.5	-59.9	-68.9	320.0	20.0	15548.0
117.0	-59.7	-68.7	318.7	19.3	15628.7
102.3	-61.8	-70.8	305.0	12.3	16463.0
100.0	-62.1	-71.1	305.0	11.3	16605.1
93.3	-62.5	-71.5			17033.6
25.9	-49.7	-62.7			25184.4

JFK 254 at 44 NMiles from Upton

Acc. site ~ 15 NMiles SE of Upton



24.7 -49.7 -62.7

25495.0

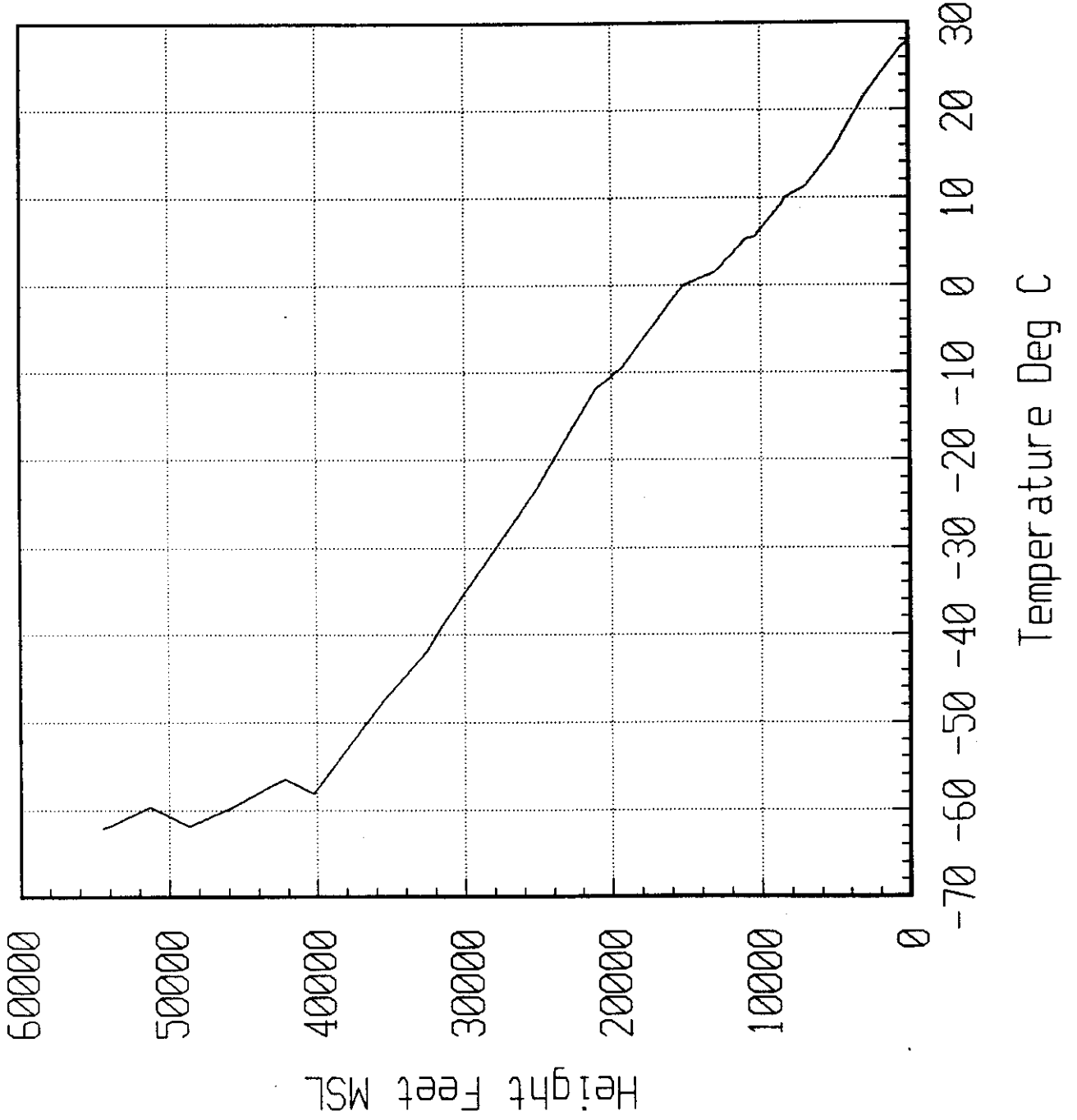
PARCEL: DEW PT.= 288.7 POT. TEMP= 301.1 EQUIV.POT.TEMP= 334.9 MIX= 12.3  
PRECIP.WATER= 30.4 CONV.TEMP= 30.9 FCST MAX= 0.0 LIFTED INDEX= -0.6  
TOTALS= 43.4 EQUIL.PRES.= 253.8 K-INDEX= 28.1 SWEAT INDEX=190.4

15

~~2/2~~



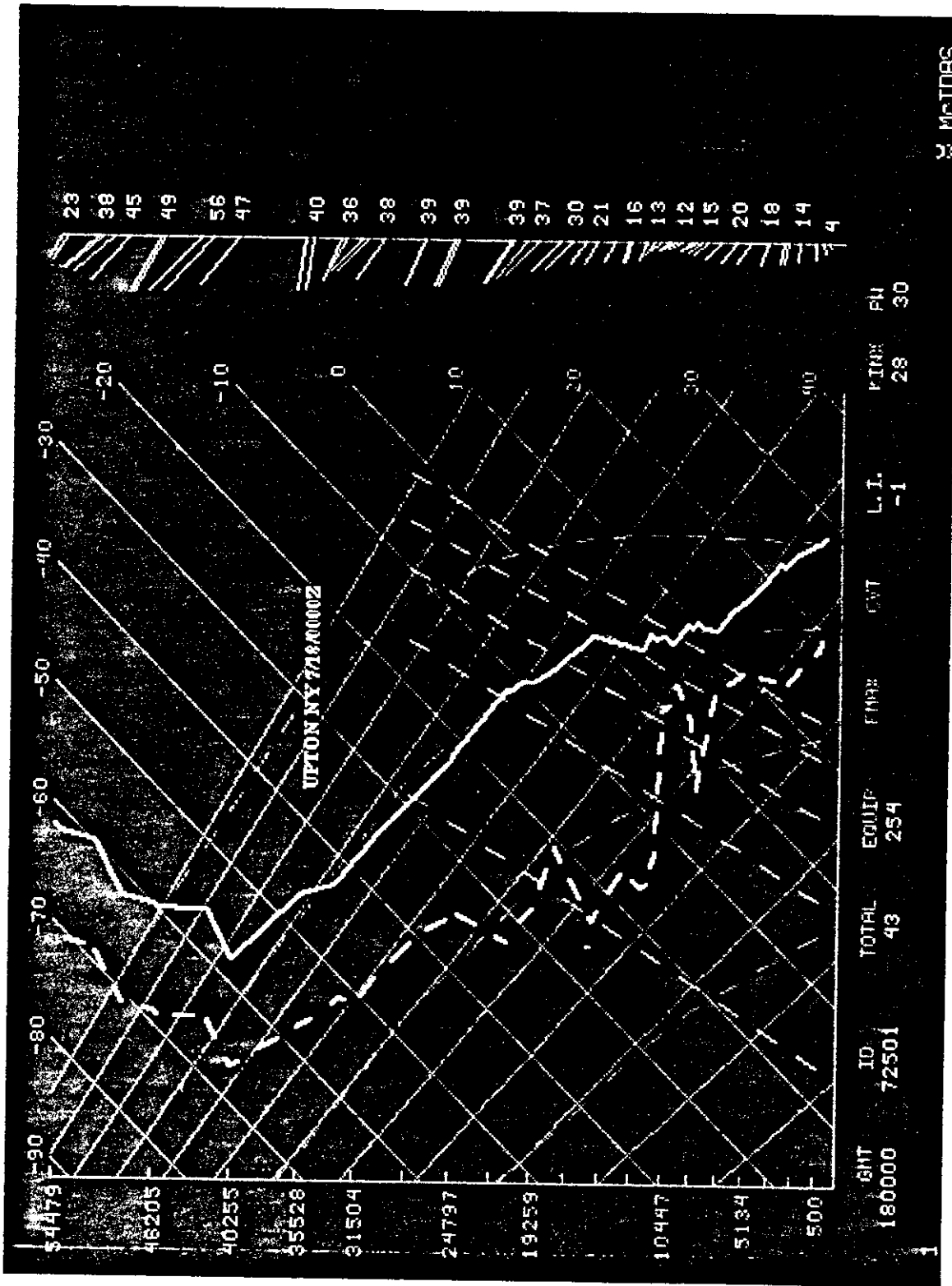
Upton, NY 7/18/96 0000Z



16

MM





McIDORS

17

MM

**Robert D. Gallagher**

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1 Fairbanks Road, Chelmsford, MA, 01824, (508) 256-0794

23 October 1996

Mr. Robert Francis, Vice Chairman  
U. S. National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20594

Dear Mr. Francis:

With regard to the TWA Flight 800 crash have you considered that a possible cause of the ignition of the explosion might have been a lightning discharge?

Professional pilots reported a "flash of light " in the sky just before the explosion. Is there some reason that lightning has been ruled out?

Mr. Mark Malone of The National Lightning Detection Network (NLDN) reports that no lightning was detected within 100 miles of the crash site on their network. However, the NLDN only records cloud-to-ground discharges and filters out cloud-to-cloud discharges from their database. If lightning did occur at 13,700 ft. it might have been a cloud-to-cloud discharge. Also, the NLDN detection efficiency for off-shore events is only 60%.

Normally a perfectly conducting enclosure acts as a "Faraday shield" and protects internal occupants and equipment from harm of high voltage discharges. This is demonstrated by the Van deGraff Generator operator who sits in a conducting screened enclosure surrounded by spectacular high voltage arcs. One might thus dismiss lightning as causing any problem to an aircraft enclosed with a perfectly conducting skin.

However, early newspaper accounts reported that Boeing 747's of the vintage of TWA/800 had developed fatigue cracks in the aircraft skin at the junction of the wings and the body of these aircraft. This same article indicated that residual jet fuel might be associated with these cracks. These cracks were described as being adjacent to the main fuel tank compartment that exploded.

If a lightning discharge occurred from wing-to-wing (or nose, or tail to wing) the flow of current in the aircraft skin might cause arcing/sparking at such a crack. If jet fuel was present at the crack "ignition" of the fuel might have occurred. If the fuel-air ratio in the enclosed area behind the crack was just right a minor explosion might have occurred. That minor explosion could have ruptured the main fuel tank causing the major explosion that ripped the plane apart.

18

~~18~~

Early newspaper articles reported a small initial explosion then a major explosion. More recent articles report a low energy explosion (more indicative of jet fuel) rather than "high explosives". The recent article also reported that the main fuel tank debris examined showed deformation indicating both an external and an internal explosion with respect to the fuel tank. These accounts would tend to support the above theory.

One might ask, why should the lightning current jump the crack and make a spark if there was conducting metal surrounding the crack? Just as the wings flexed during flight causing the crack by metal fatigue that same flexure during flight will open and close that crack alternately causing contact and non-contact. If lightning current was passing across the crack when it was closed the associated magnetic field (inductance) will tend to cause the current to continue flowing when the crack opens thus causing a spark. Much the same as opening the contacts of a high power switch under load results in arcing.

A second scenario to consider might be if lightning caused ignition of jet fuel at a crack but no explosion occurred immediately but that a 320 kt. wind whipped flame burned in the crack with fuel wicked up the inside surface of the aircraft skin in a blow torch effect. Such a hot flame might have burned through the nearby fuel tank thus causing the fatal explosion.

Proving that lightning was the cause of this tragedy may be very difficult but perhaps a case built on circumstantial evidence might be persuasive.

If TWA/800 was hit by lightning the "black-box" recorders may have picked up electromagnetic "noise" (static) on their recordings. Perhaps the mysterious "noise" at the end of the recording is not acoustic "noise" caused by aircraft breakup picked up by the cockpit microphone but instead an electromagnetic pulse picked up in the aircraft wiring caused by the lightning current flowing through the aircraft skin. A very high current flowing along an aircraft skin punctured with cracks, windows, radio and radar radomes might admit enough radiation to be recorded on the "black-box" tape.

Perhaps a time-spectrum analysis of the "noise" on the TWA/800 tape could be compared with "noise" pulses on tapes of other aircraft known to have been hit with lightning discharges to prove or disprove the lightning theory. There should be adequate data of this type available due to the large number of military and commercial aircraft reported damaged each year by lightning. Also, any "noise" pulses detected on the tape from takeoff to the end of the recording should be examined in case the second scenario described above was the way it happened.

The recovered aircraft skin could be examined for signs of "lightning strike damage". I would assume that the FAA has a large database of information describing this type of effect due to the reported large cost of damage to aircraft from lightning strikes each year.

If the crack area has been recovered it might be examined to see if any electrical arc or burn marks can be found. Pitting may also be observed on metal at an electrical arc due to electron erosion effects.

Also, if any structural metal near the crack shows signs of high temperature deformation the blow torch theory might be explored further.

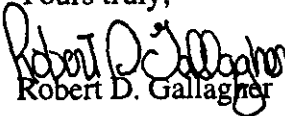
19



Finally, Mr. Mark Malone, of Global Atmospherics, Inc., NLDN, has suggested that "PIREPS (Pilot REPortS)" for the evening of July 17, 1996 might be examined to see if any other pilots reported "lightning discharges" in the accident area. He also raises the issue of "bolt out of the blue" lightning phenomena which occur on clear days.

I have attached illustrative sketches, pertinent e-mail messages and the Global Atmospherics "FaultFinder" report for your information.

I am not an expert in any of the above areas and I offer these theories "**only as suggestions**" by a concerned citizen who has done a lot of flying as a passenger. If I can be of any help to your investigation please feel free to call on me, however, I feel that at this time I have told you all that I know.

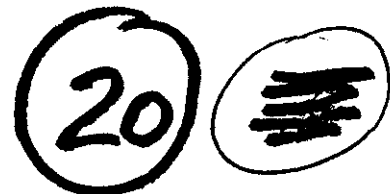
Yours truly,  
  
Robert D. Gallagher

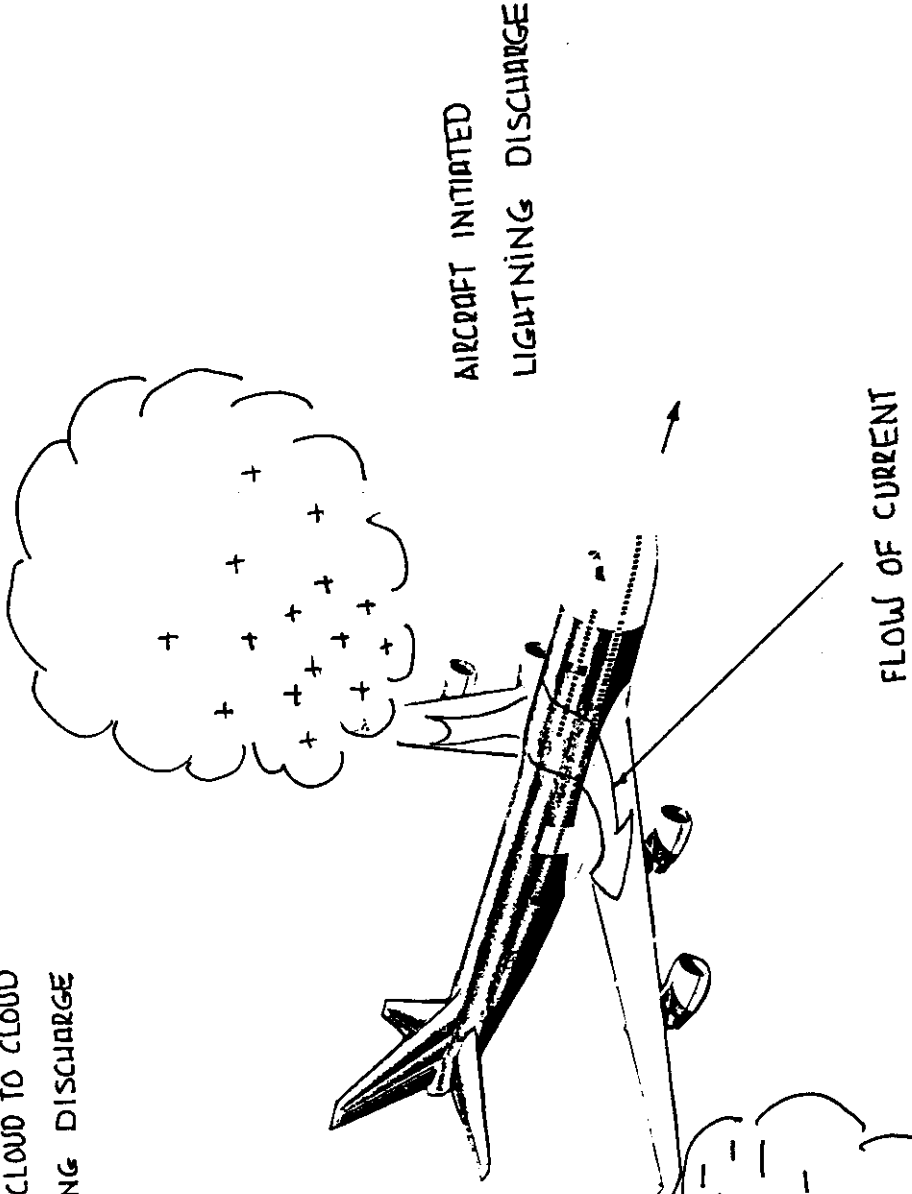
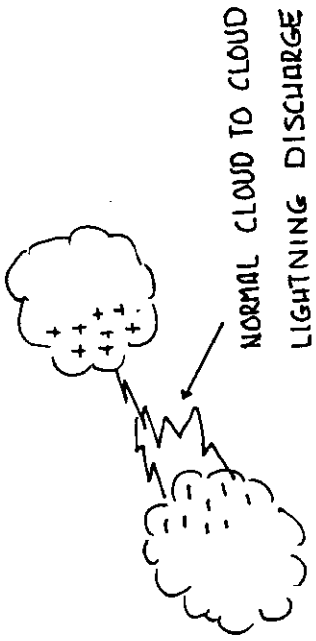
RDG/CC:

Mark Malone, Global Atmospherics, Inc.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Cloud to Aircraft Discharge
2. Scenario 1
3. Scenario 2
4. E-mail Mark Malone 9/27/96
5. E-mail Mark Malone 10/16/96
6. FaultFinder Cover Letter
7. FaultFinder Report
8. FaultFinder Map/Plot



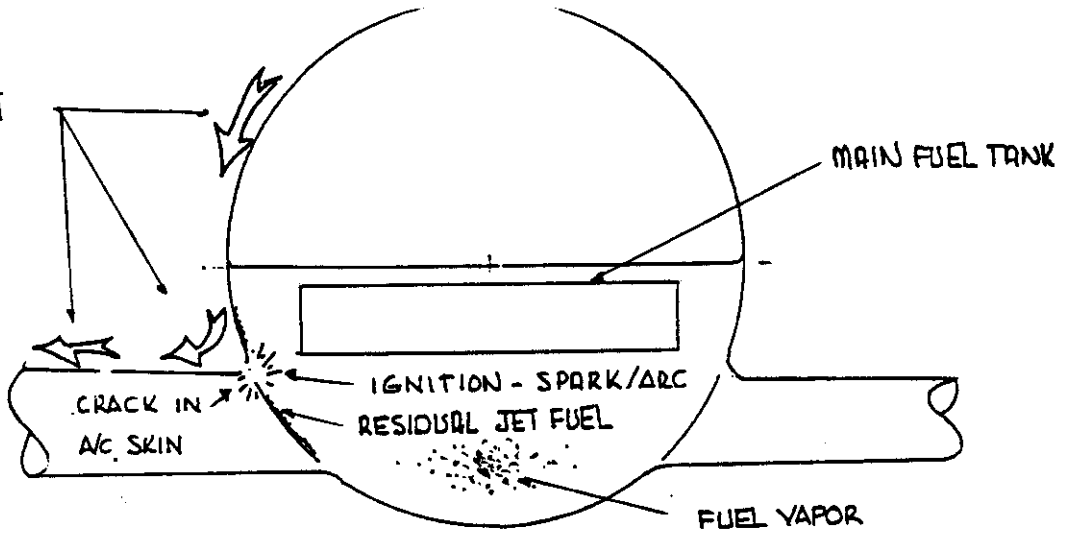


21



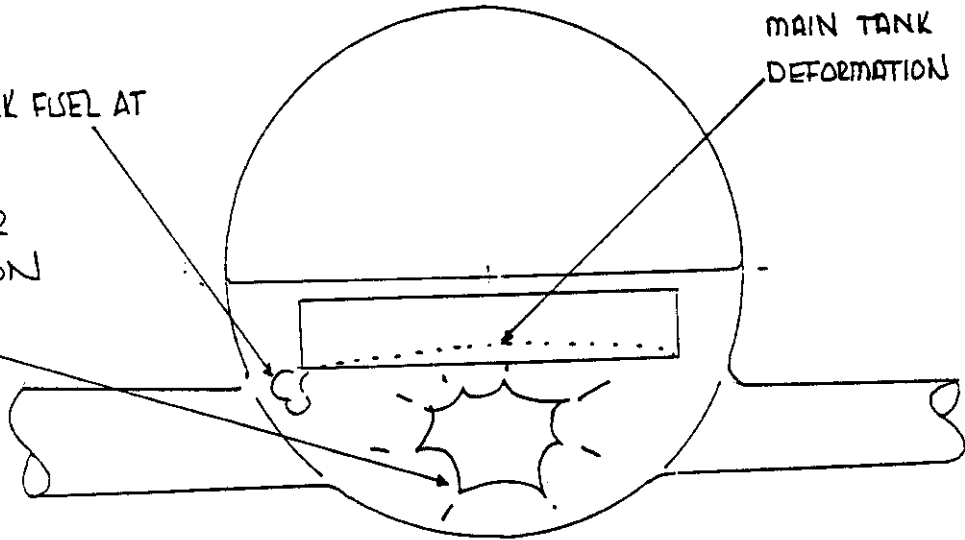
LIGHTNING CURRENT  
IN AIRCRAFT SKIN

①



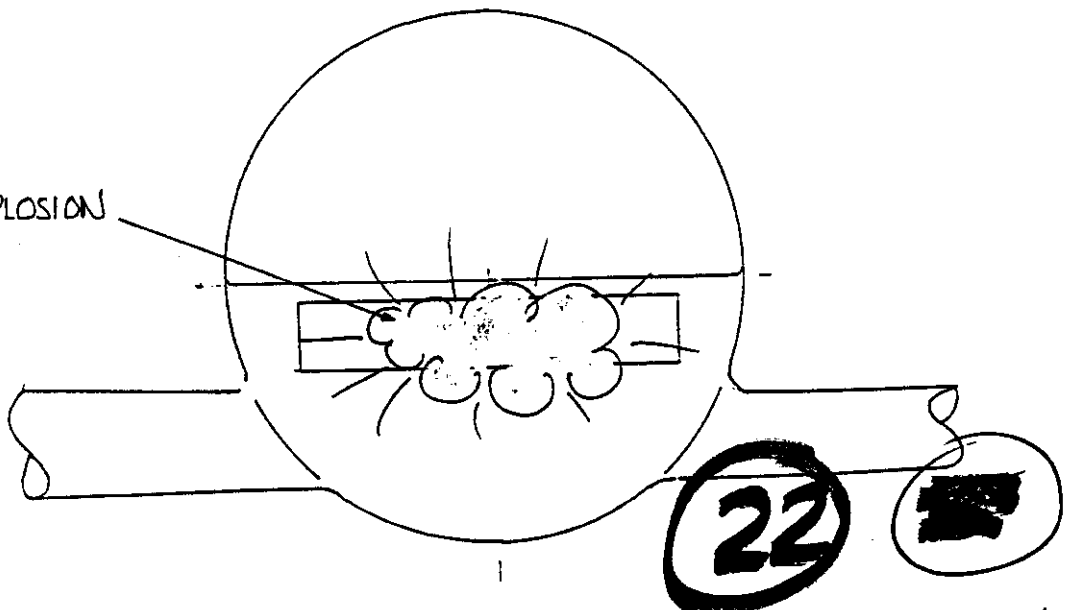
MAIN TANK FUEL AT  
RUPTURE  
RESIDUAL VAPOR  
INITIAL EXPLOSION

②



MAIN TANK EXPLOSION

③



SCENARIO 1

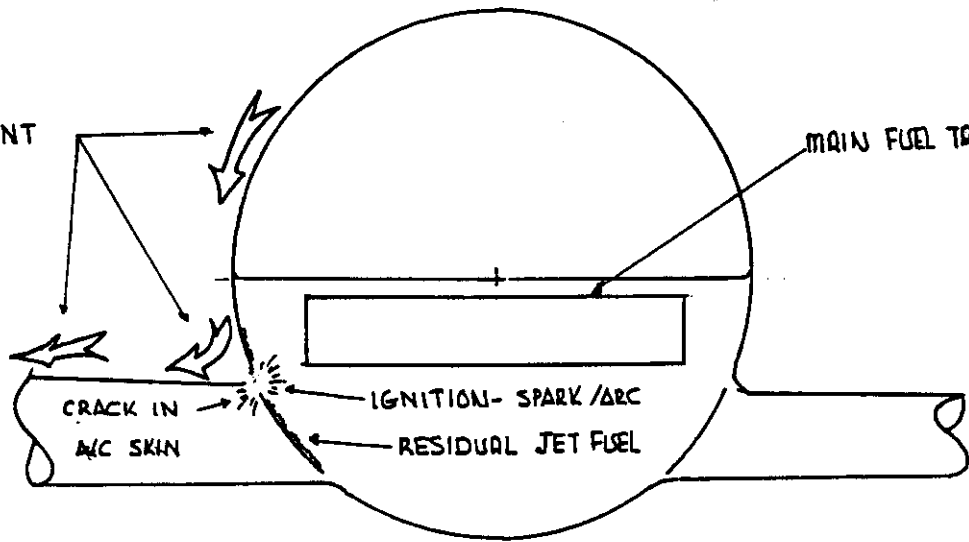
22

RDG 10/21/96

LIGHTNING CURRENT  
IN AIRCRAFT SKIN

MAIN FUEL TANK

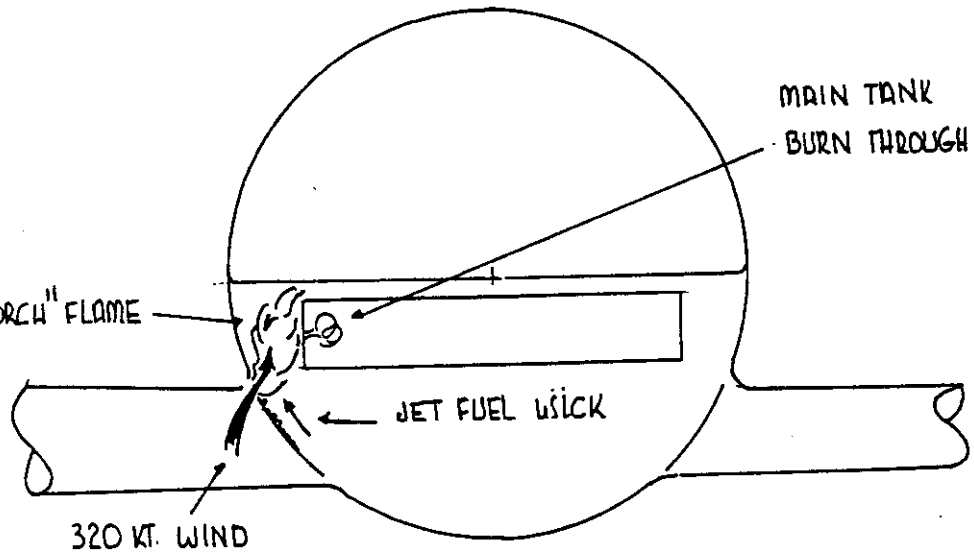
①



HOT! "BLOWS TORCH" FLAME

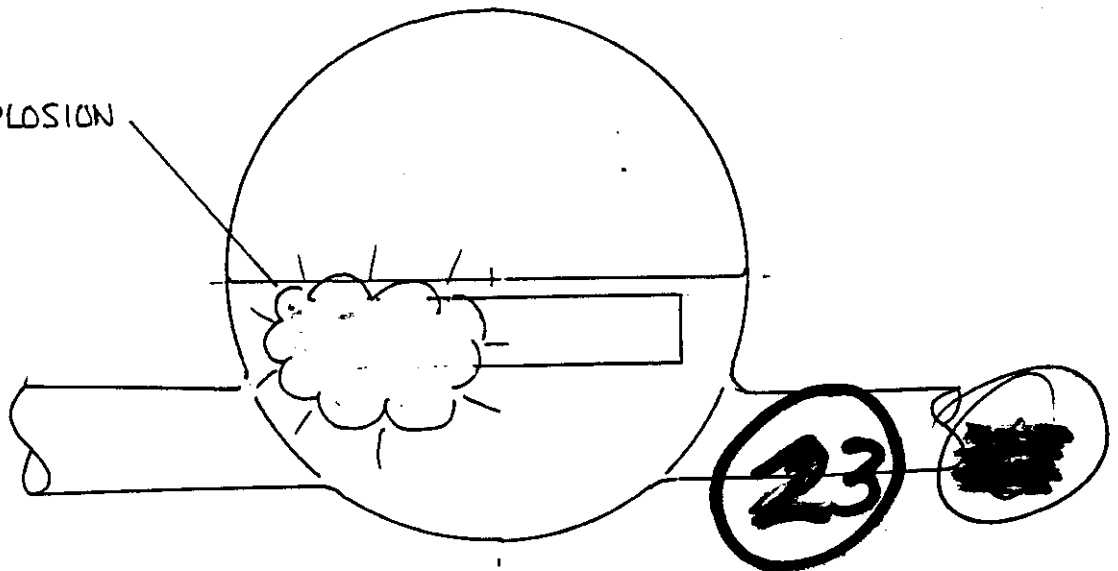
MAIN TANK  
BURN THROUGH

②



MAIN TANK EXPLOSION

③



SCENARIO 2



Date: Fri, 27 Sep 1996 15:51:58 GMT  
From: mdm@gds.com (Mark Malone)  
To: rdginc@tiac.net  
Subject: Re: Lightning Data - response to your inquiry  
X-Sun-Charset: US-ASCII

Mr. Gallagher:

Glad to help, we'll do a lightning data report (on a map printout) referencing that lat and lon. Be aware of some things:

1. The National Network provides cloud-to-ground information only (both pos/neg polarities). Intra-cloud lightning we filter out.
2. Detection efficiencies off the coast probably drop to 60% (sensors are land based., although we have very long range capability - 1000's of kilometers). NWS uses our long range stuff for over water severe storm detection. I'll see about checking both data bases (US and Long range).
3. If there is no lightning detected for that time period, we'll show where nearest lightning was occurring.

Also...who do I send this report to? I'll need an address.

Thanks

Mark Malone  
Global Atmospheric, Inc.

mdm@gds.com

24



Date: Tue, 15 Oct 1996 19:54:31 GMT  
From: mdm@gds.com (Mark Malone)  
To: rdginc@tiac.net  
Subject: Re: Lightning Data July 17, 1996  
X-Sun-Charset: US-ASCII

> From rdginc@tiac.net Tue Oct 15 00:18 GMT 1996  
> X-Sender: rdginc@pop.tiac.net  
> Mime-Version: 1.0  
> Date: Mon, 14 Oct 1996 20:20:13 +0500  
> To: mdm@gds.com (Mark Malone)  
> From: rdginc@tiac.net (Bob Gallagher)  
> Subject: Re: Lightning Data July 17, 1996  
>  
> Mark,  
>  
> Thank you for your help! Can you estimate the probability that there was a  
> lightning discharge in that area and your network did not record it? (i.e.  
> one in a million???)  
>  
> I will forward your report to the NTSB with a note when I receive it.  
>  
> Thanks again!  
>  
> Bob Gallagher  
>  
Bob,

Without knowing a lot of other things, like was there convection in that area? Satellite imagery showed clouds? surface observation reports. etc. I can only state that our chances of missing an entire storm is pretty low, almost nil. However, if there was a "bolt out of the blue", yes there is a chance we missed it, especially if it were a cloud to cloud strike, which we do not measure. I would check NWS surface reports and archived satellite and radar data too. Also, other pilots may have filed "PIREPS (PIlot REPortS)" which are in-flight updates as observed by aircrews as they fly through areas. The NWS or FAA should have that data.

For more precise quantification, you may want to contact some of our academic affiliates like Dr. Phil Krider at the University of Arizona Atmospheric Science Dept. Or, Dr. Martin Uman at the University of Florida Electrical Eng. Dept. Or, Dr. Richard Orville, at Texas A&M College Station, TX. Phil and Martin founded our company, and Dr. Orville designed the National Lightning Detection Network (when he was at S.U.N.Y. - Albany, I worked under him there). Finally, another scientist I recommend is Dr. Vince Idone at S.U.N.Y. - Albany Atmospheric Science Dept.

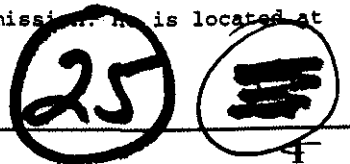
here's some phone numbers:

Krider: (520) 621-6831  
Uman: (904) 392-4038  
Idone: (518) 442-3300 ( I think this is SUNYA's main number...not sure)

Another excellent scientist that we work with is Mr. Ron Holle at the National Severe Storms Lab in Norman Oklahoma, he is real adept at quantifying this sort of thing. (He and I and others co-authored a short paper on a "bolt out of the blue" lightning phenomena that occurred in Connecticut during the Winter. Ron can be reached by e-mailing: holle@nssla.nssl.uoknor.edu

Oh, NASA also has OTD's in space (Optical Transient Detectors) that pick up lightning from space platforms. Check the NASA.GOV web site or contact them directly. there is a gentleman named Otha Vaughn that does some pretty incredible reserach in that area and supports the NASA mission. He is located at the Marshall Space Flight Center. I don't have his number.

Hope this helps.





## FaultFinder™ Report

October 18, 1996

Robert Gallagher  
1 Fairbanks Road  
Chelmsford, MA 01824

Dear Mr. Gallagher:

Thank you for using Global Atmospheric's *FaultFinder™* Lightning Report to validate your event. Data from the National Lightning Detection Network™ was analyzed for your requested search time and region.

Reference Number: SO-819

### Report Details:

Requested By: Robert Gallagher

Search period: July 17, 1996 20:20:00 EDT

To: July 17, 1996 20:35:00 EDT

Location Region: Latitude: 40.5833  
Longitude: -72.7167

### Results:

Strokes Detected: 0 (within 100 miles)

Suspect Strokes: 0 detected on centerpoint  
(nearest stroke detected at 361.0 miles)

If you have any other questions about your report, please call me at (800) 283-4557.

Sincerely,

William Brooks





Global Atmospherics, Inc.

The National Lightning Detection Network™

**FaultFinder™ Report**

Individual Stroke Print-Out

## FaultFinder Report

Robert Gallagher - Consultant  
ASCII Data

*Dates and Times Below are in GMT (EDT + 4 hours)  
To get local time subtract 4 hours from times below*

No detected lightning within the 100 mile buffer radius. Nearest stroke detected at 361.0 miles.

27



2705 East Medina Road  
Tucson, Arizona 85706-7155  
■ Telephone 602 573-0090 or 800 263-4557 ■  
Fax 602 741-2848

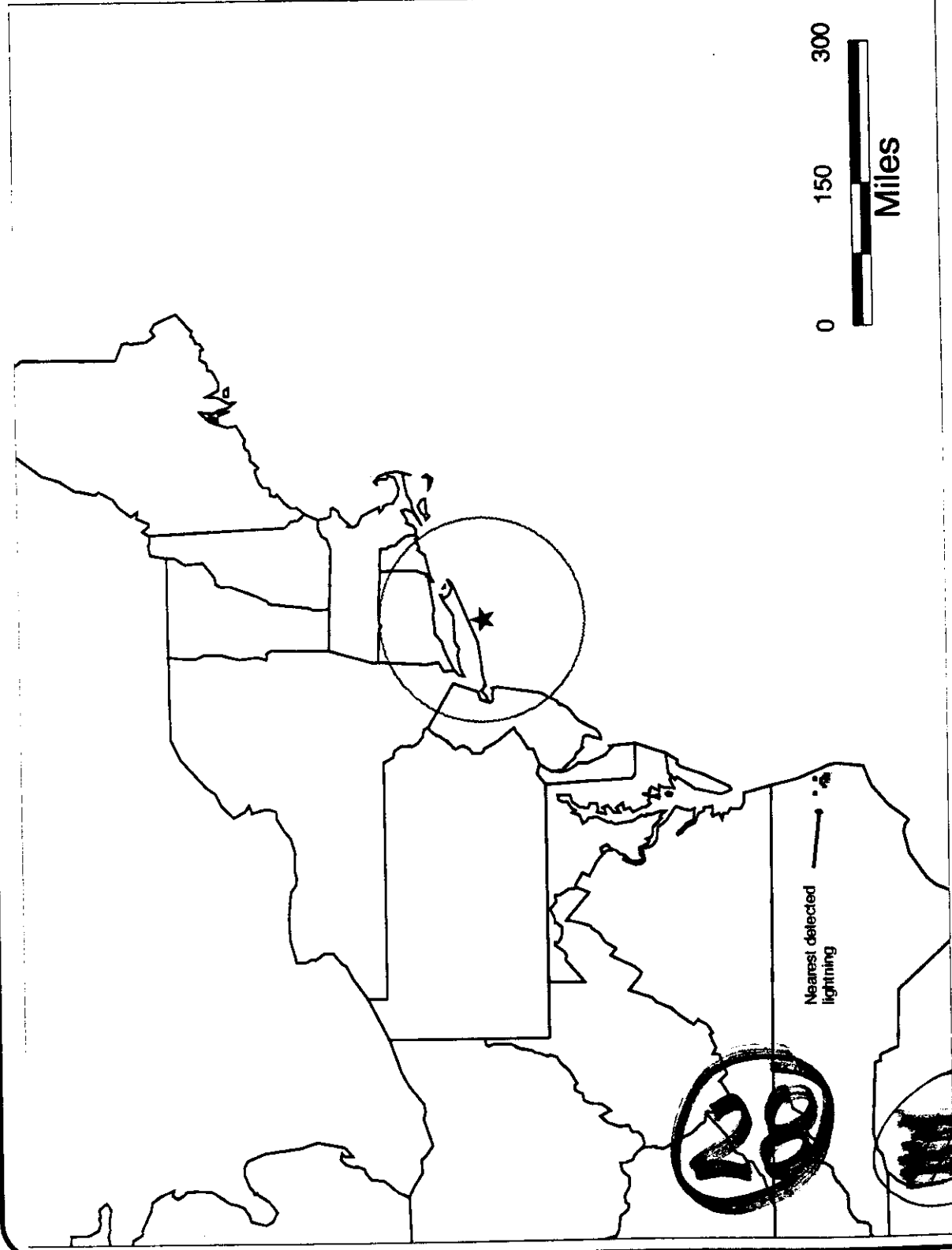


Global Atmospherics, Inc.

The National Lightning Detection Network™

# FaultFinder™ Report

## Map of Selected Region and Time Period



**Robert Gallagher**

**- Consultant**  
Search Parameters

Date/Times Searched:

07/17/1996 20:20 EDT

To:

07/17/1996 20:35 EDT

Search Point/Radius:

Latitude: 40.5833

Longitude: -72.7167

(Green Star at center of  
circle)

Circle is 100 mile radius

Reference: SO819

Lightning ground strike  
points are marked with a  
blue point.

2705 East Medina Road

Tucson, Arizona 85706-7155

■ Telephone (520) 573-0090 or 800 283-4557

■ Fax (520) 741-2848




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## Background

The Optical Transient Detector (OTD), the world's first space-based sensor capable of detecting and locating lightning events in the daytime as well as during the nighttime with high detection efficiency was designed and built at Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC). The concept for this instrument was developed at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in the 1980's, and was selected for development as part of NASA's Earth Observing System (EOS). The purpose of the sensor is to detect the full spectrum of lightning flashes, including cloud to ground, cloud to cloud, and intra-cloud (within cloud) lightning events. Ground-based techniques detect only cloud-to-ground lightning events which are believed to comprise 25% of the total lightning activity. In addition, these techniques generally detect lightning activity near land masses; very little information is provided regarding lightning events over the Earth's oceans. OTD is designed to aid scientists in determining the global distribution of lightning activity and thunderstorms and the characteristics of the Earth's electric circuit.

The OTD was launched on 3 April 1995 into a near polar orbit at an inclination of 70 degrees with respect to the equator, at an altitude of 740 km. At any given instant, this views a 1300 by 1300 km region of the earth.

The OTD development team adopted a fast-track, low-cost approach, making maximum use of engineering model hardware configured for flight on a small satellite. Launch on the Orbital Sciences Corporation Pegasus rocket was provided free via a data buy arrangement providing low cost access to space with a shared government-industry risk factor. The instrument was designed, fabricated, space qualified, calibrated, and delivered within a period of nine months. It is designed to observe lightning for a period of two years or more.

The Microlab satellite carrying the OTD (silver canister) shared the launch with two commercial communications satellites called Orbcoms.

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## Scientific Objectives

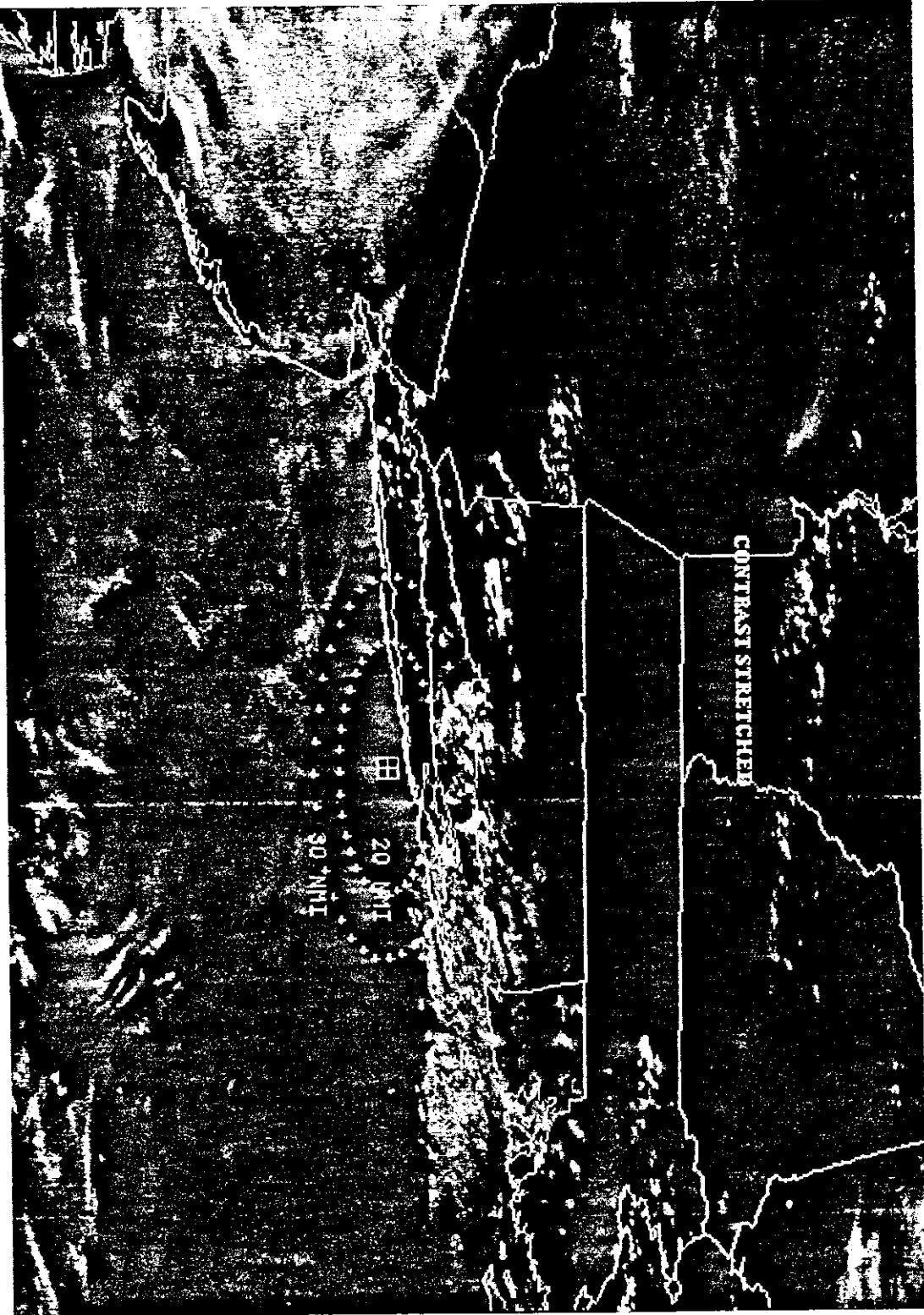
OTD is designed to detect, locate and measure the intensity of lightning for scientific investigation of the distribution and variability of total lightning over the Earth and to increase our understanding of the Earth's atmosphere system. Lightning is closely coupled to storm convection dynamics, and can be correlated to the global rates, amounts and distribution of convective precipitation. The Optical Transient Detector contributes to studies of Earth's water cycle, sea-surface temperature variations, electrical coupling of thunderstorms with the ionosphere and magnetosphere, and modeling of the global distribution of electrical fields and currents in the Earth's atmosphere. In addition, it begins the development of a global lightning climatological database for use in NASA's Mission to Planet Earth

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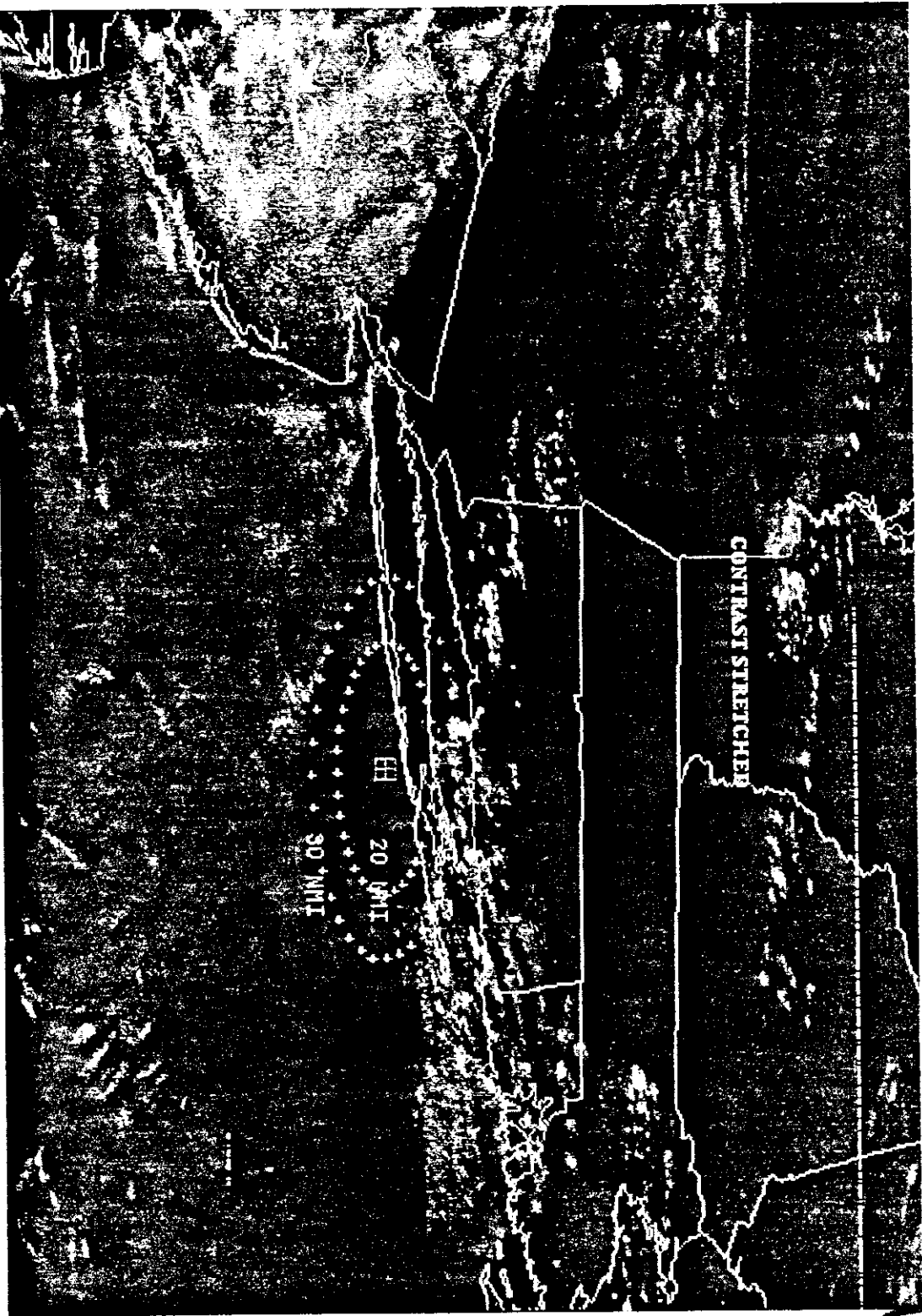


1 0001 6-2 IMG 01 17 JUL 95199 233200 03210 15344 01 00 2 METERS



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10002 6-8 IMG 01 17 JUL 92199 234500 03810 15344 01 00 8 METERS



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8 00008 6-8 ING 04 18 JUL 96200 001500 03209 15345 01 00



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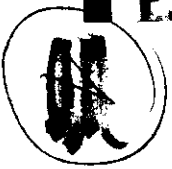
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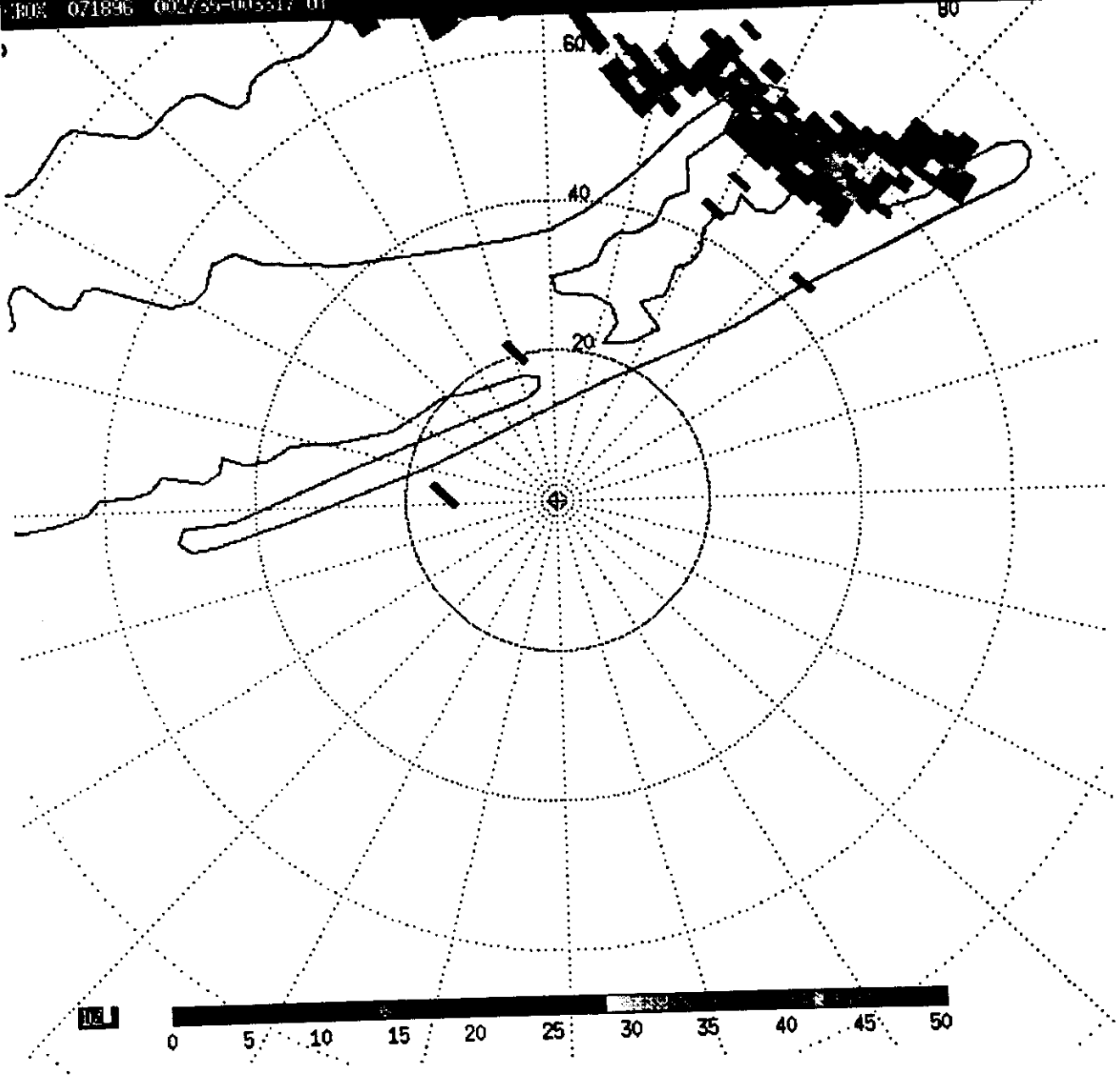
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20 NH  
30 NH



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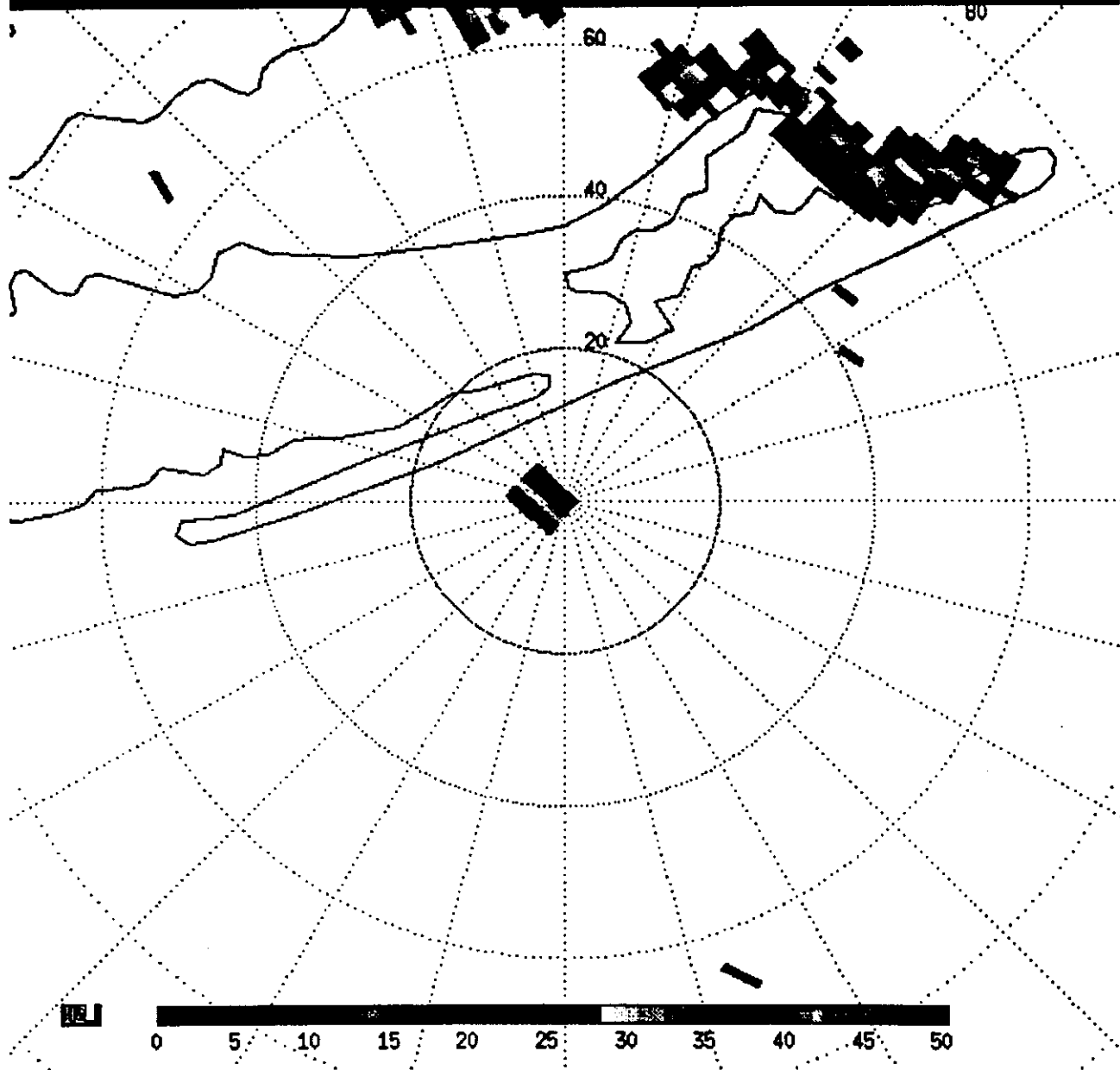


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BOX 071896 00535-006907 UT

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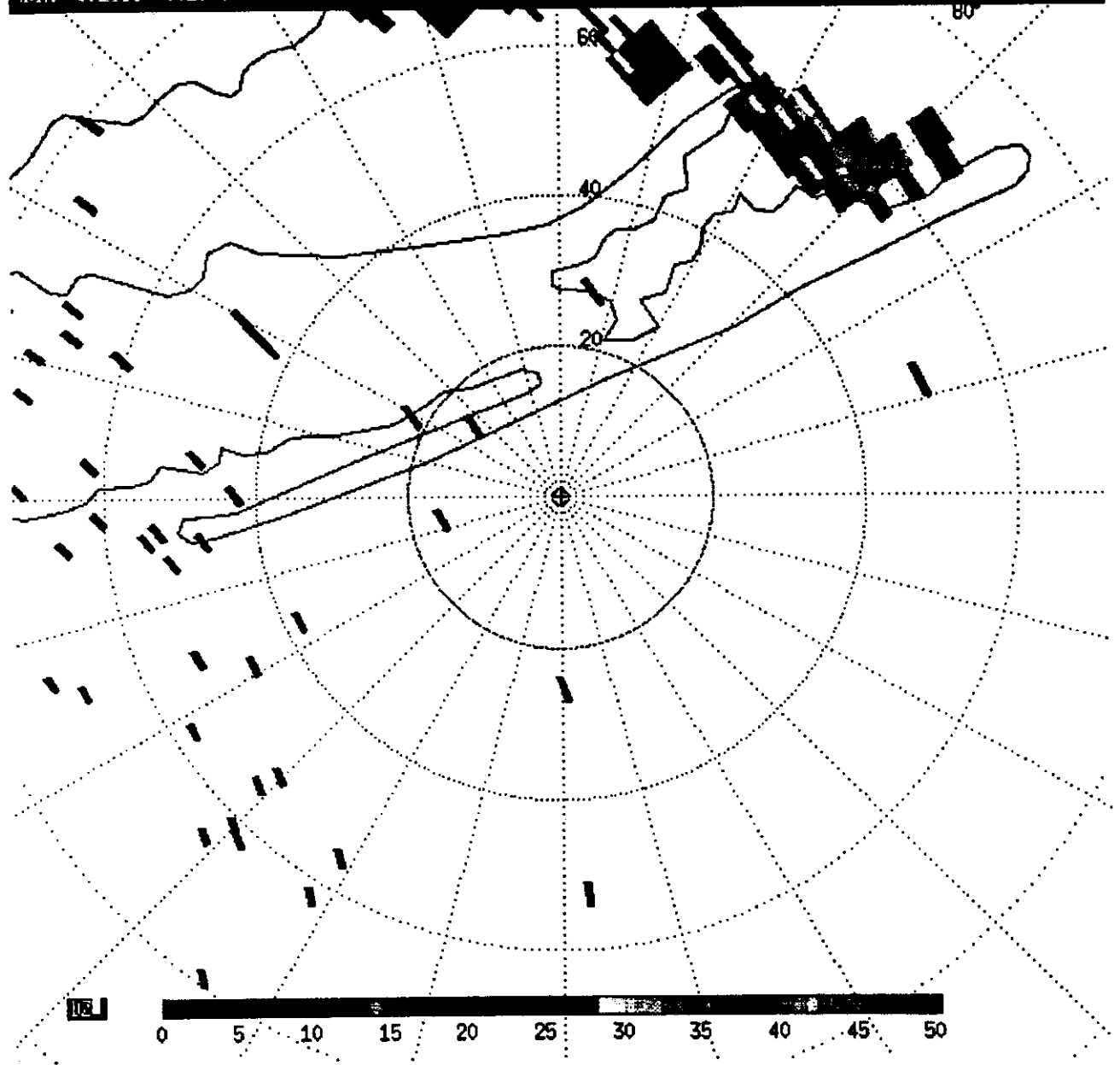


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A hand-drawn scribble or signature inside a circle, consisting of several horizontal, overlapping strokes.

001% 071896 002648-003619 UT

Display: PFI Elevation: 0.4



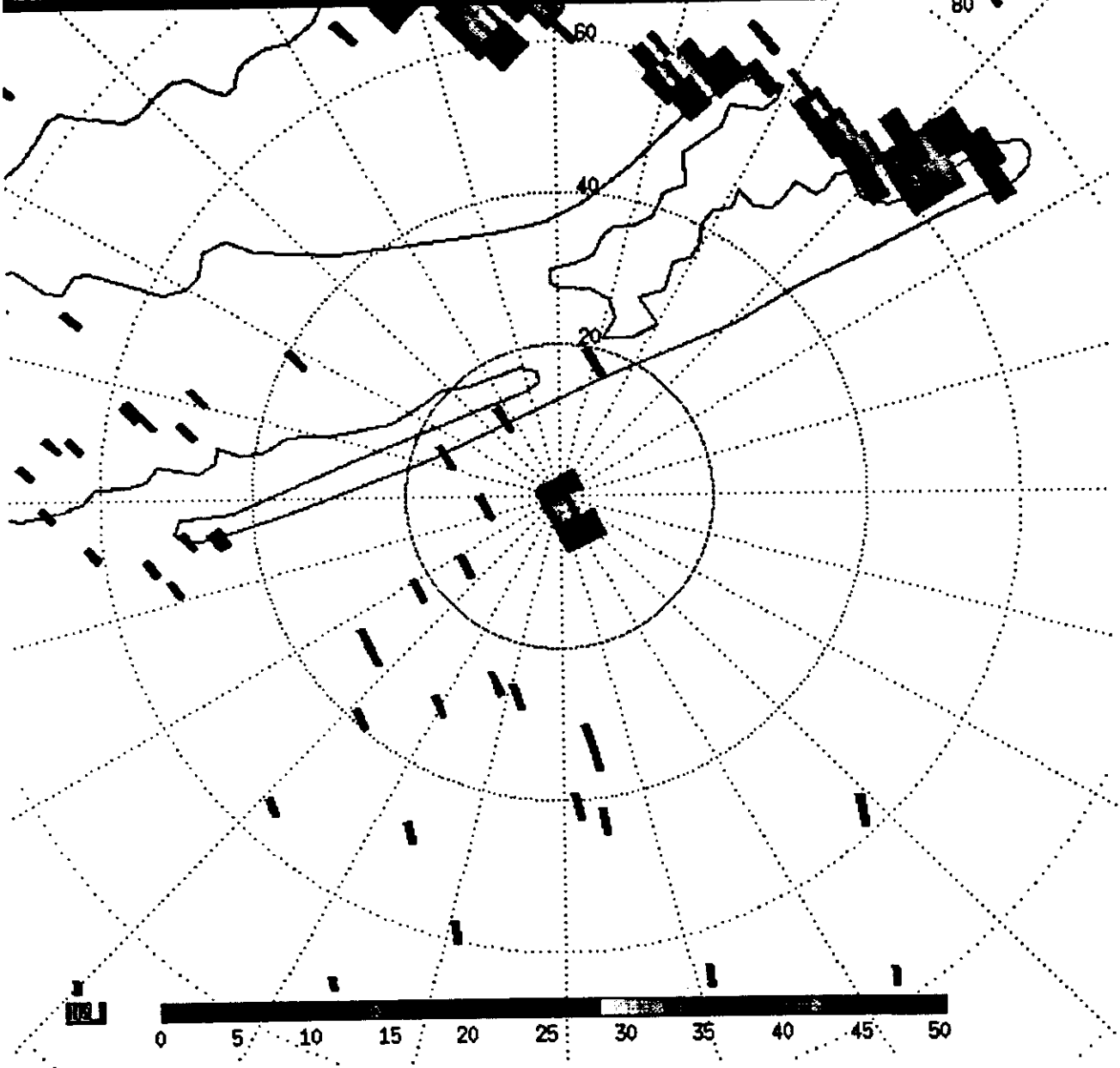
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Inplay: FPI Elevation: 0.4

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AMERICAN MEDICAL SOCIETY

# Journal of the American Medical Association



# Radar Observations of a Major Industrial Fire



R. R. Rogers and W. O. J. Brown

Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

## ABSTRACT

On 23 May 1996, a Montreal suburban paint factory containing several hundred thousand gallons of paints, solvents, and other chemicals burned to the ground in a spectacular fire. The smoke plume from the fire was readily detected by three radars operated by McGill University for routine observations of the atmosphere. An S-band (10-cm wavelength) scanning radar provided a plan view of the plume from the time of its initial appearance over the plant until the fire was finally extinguished. These data reveal the history of the plume, showing how it meandered and spread as it was advected downwind. The plume passed directly over the site of two vertically pointing radars, one a high-resolution X-band radar (3-cm wavelength) and the other a UHF (33-cm wavelength) wind profiler. Doppler spectra of the smoke echoes in the vertical beam of the profiler indicated predominantly downward velocities, but it was not possible to distinguish in the spectra between scattering by settling particles and scattering by the refractively perturbed air. The reflectivity of the plume in the vertical beam of the wind profiler, expressed in terms of the rain-equivalent reflectivity factor, had values up to 40 dBZ. At the shorter wavelength of the X-band radar, the reflectivity factors were less by amounts ranging from 20 to more than 30 dBZ. The difference in reflectivity can probably be accounted for by a combination of 1) the presence in the plume of particles on the order of 10 mm in diameter, which are too large to satisfy the Rayleigh scattering approximation at the shorter wavelength, and 2) a strongly perturbed structure of atmospheric refractivity, caused by the heating and turbulent mixing generated by the fire and creating a strong echo at the longer wavelength.

## 1. Introduction

On 23 May 1996, a spectacular fire destroyed a paint factory in the Montreal, Canada, suburb of Laval, located approximately 10 km northwest of the McGill University campus in the center of the city. The blaze leveled three buildings filled with paint, wood stain, and preservatives; solvents; and other chemicals used in the manufacturing of paint. A column of black smoke rising from the fire was clearly visible from the McGill campus. It appeared to reach a height of at least a kilometer and then to spread southeastward, toward the campus and downtown Montreal. By the time the smoke trail was overhead

at the campus, it was no longer black and was only barely perceptible as a kind of haze that caused an increase in the amount of diffuse light from directions near the sun.

The smoke trail was readily detected by three radars operated by McGill that are used for continuous atmospheric observations. Data from an S-band surveillance radar located 30 km west of the downtown site show the plume as it first appeared over the paint factory and as it grew and was advected toward the southeast. A vertically pointing X-band radar on the downtown campus provided high-resolution measurements of the reflectivity of the plume as it passed overhead. At the same site, a UHF wind profiling radar measured the reflectivity and the Doppler spectra of the plume overhead. Curiously, in spite of the strong radar echoes from the plume, it was optically too thin to give more than a brief detectable signal on our laser ceilometer, and that signal might actually have been caused by a patch of thin cloud at the top of the boundary layer.

Corresponding author address: R. R. Rogers, Dept. of Atmospheric Sciences, McGill University, 805 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal H3A 2K6, Canada.

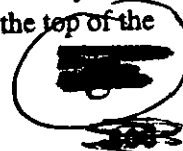
E-mail: rogers@zephyr.meteo.mcgill.ca

Initial form 12 November 1996.

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Publication of the American Meteorological Society

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This paper describes the results of a study of the smoke plume. The data provide information on the way in which such a plume is helpful in monitoring plume behavior. The dependence of the reflectivities at wavelengths of 3.2, 10.4, and 32 cm indicates a strong deviation from Rayleigh scattering. The wavelength dependence is probably due to a combination of Bragg scattering, surface fluctuations and the existence of large structures in the plume that are too large for the Rayleigh approximation at the shorter wavelength, both of which favor the longer wavelength.

## 2. The fire

The fire started soon after 12:00 p.m. (local time). Workers returning from lunch were startled by shooting from a large mixing machine. It is speculated that the fire may have been caused by an overheated bearing in the mixer. The destruction of the plant was so complete that the cause of the fire may never be known for sure. The fire started before the workers arrived but they tried to contain the blaze but were thwarted by the extreme heat and the threat of explosions. The fire spread quickly throughout the factory complex, causing roofs and exterior walls to collapse. The buildings were shaken by dozens of small explosions, which shot fireballs, chemicals, and debris high into the air. Three cars parked in a lot beside the plant were destroyed. Although 60 firefighters and a half dozen pumper trucks were on the scene, the fire did not come under control until the

fire had burned for about 100 min.

The fire was made of a mixture of 1000 gal of oil, 300 gal of paint, and smaller amounts of wood and other materials. The fire was contained by the Montreal Canadiens hockey arena, which was situated to the west of the plant. The position of the arena and the high concentration of smoke that were not contained by the arena were no doubt the cause of the fire. The fire was contained by the wood in the arena. The structure of the plume was a cloud of aerosols and chemical compounds.

## 3. The radars

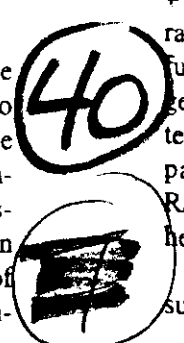
The scanning radar at the McGill campus operates equipment that is used for monitoring the downtown area. The scanning radar at the Marshall University campus is located on the College campus. Located 20 km from the main campus are a JHP scanning radar and a high-resolution, dual-polarization radar nicknamed the VPR. The VPR is equipped with a Random Access Memory (RAM) that provides high-resolution soundings, which typically reach about 50 km. These instruments work all the time around the clock. On the Macdonald campus is a large ground scanning Doppler radar used for weather surveillance, similar to Next Generation Radar in its operating characteristics. It runs continuously but data are only archived for weather situations of interest, principally precipitation events. The main characteristics of the radars are listed in Table I.

TABLE I. Characteristics of the three radars

	Scanning radar	VPR	Wind profiler
Frequency band	S band	X band	UHF
Wavelength, cm	10.4	3.2	32
Peak power, kW	800	40	0.5
Pulse duration, $\mu$ s	0.8	0.1	0.7
Beamwidth, °	0.86	2	9
Sampling period, s	150	10	1

## 4. Smoke plume observed by the scanning radar

Figure 1 shows the plume as it was observed by the scanning S-band radar at the time when it had spread to the McGill campus. This is a 1.5-km constant altitude planar position indicator (CAPPI) display with a spatial resolution of 1 km, which is a composite plot assembled from more fundamental slant-Plan Position Indicator data and the form of the archival records of the S-band radar. The plume is plotted on a map indi-



ating the large islands of Montreal and Laval, and several smaller islands lying in the St. Lawrence River. The letter *F* is centered on the location of the fire on the island of Laval, *P* on the profiler and VPR, and *R* on the scanning radar.

The radar reflectivity of the plume is plotted in terms of its rain-equivalent reflectivity factor. These quantities are related by

$$Z = \frac{\lambda^4}{\pi^5 |K|^2} \eta, \quad (1)$$

where *Z* is the reflectivity factor (dimensions L<sup>3</sup>),  $\eta$  is the reflectivity (dimensions L<sup>-1</sup>),  $\lambda$  is the wavelength, and  $K = (m^2 - 1)/(m^2 + 2)$ , where *m* is the complex index of refraction of the scattering material (Battan 1973). For water, the dielectric factor  $|K|^2$  for wavelengths in the centimeter range and temperatures around 0°C equals approximately 0.93, and that is the value used in (1) for converting  $\eta$  to *Z*. [The reflectivity factor defined by (1) is usually denoted by *Z<sub>r</sub>* to emphasize that it is the rain-equivalent reflectivity factor, but for notational simplicity we have omitted the subscript.] Basically, the property of a target that a radar is able to sense and measure is  $\eta$ ; *Z* is a computed quantity proportional to  $\eta$ , with a constant of proportionality that depends on the wavelength. For rain, *Z* is related to the drop size distribution by

$$Z = \int_0^\infty D^6 N(D) dD, \quad (2)$$

where  $N(D)dD$  is the number of drops per unit volume of space whose diameters are between *D* and *D* + *dD*. Although *Z* has a physical significance only for radar targets consisting of precipitation, it can be useful for rescaling the reflectivity of radar targets in general. For any targets consisting of a cloud of scattering elements such as raindrops that are small compared with the wavelength, it follows from the Rayleigh scattering approximation that  $\eta \propto \lambda^{-4}$ , and hence *Z* is independent of wavelength.

By convention, the reflectivity factor is often measured on a logarithmic scale in units of decibels of

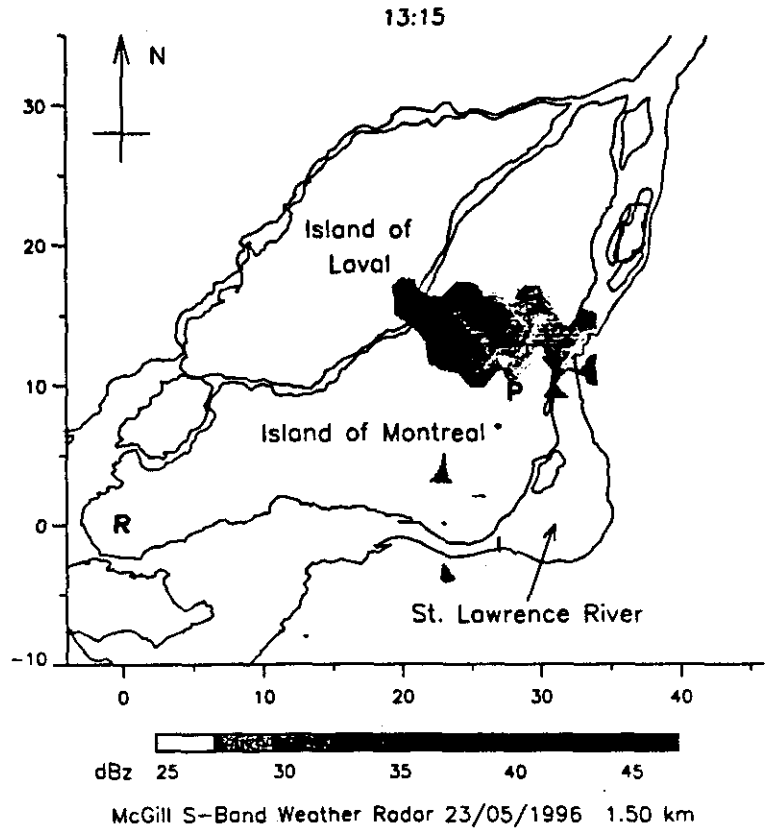


Fig. 1. Reflectivity pattern of the smoke plume observed by S-band scanning radar at 1315 EST 23 May 1996. This is a 1.5-km CAPPI map, with scales indicating the distance from the scanning radar in kilometers. The letters *F*, *P*, and *R* indicate, respectively, locations of the fire, the profiler and VPR, and the scanning radar.

reflectivity (dBZ), defined by

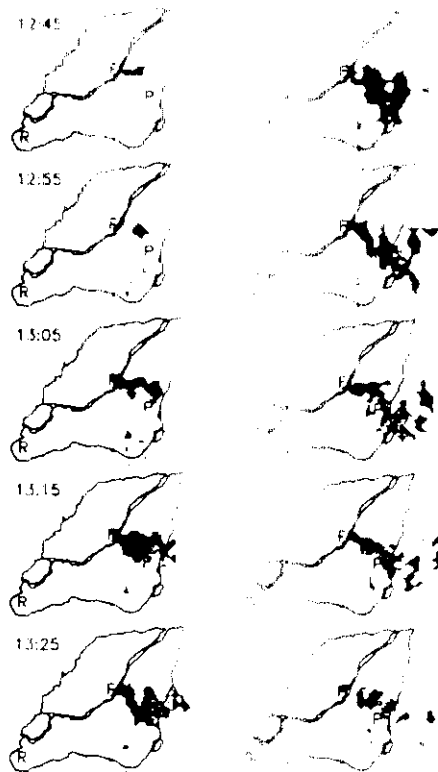
$$\zeta = 10 \log_{10} \left( \frac{Z}{Z_0} \right), \quad (3)$$

where  $Z_0 = 1 \text{ mm}^6 \text{ m}^{-3}$ . The outer contour of the smoke plume in Fig. 1 has a reflectivity factor of 25 dBZ, and the maximum reflectivities within the plume are about 45 dBZ. These are substantial reflectivities, which, for precipitation, would correspond to moderate rain.

Figure 2 shows a sequence of CAPPI displays at 10-min intervals from the time the smoke echo first appeared until the worst of the fire was over and the plume was dissipating. Here, the base map is simplified to show principally the main islands of Laval and Montreal, separated by Rivière des Prairies. The first three frames suggest that there may have been an initial explosion, followed after a short delay by the major fire. The map at 1315 EST is the same as the one shown in Fig. 1, when the plume had just reached the

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S-Band Radar  
23/5/96 1.5 km

FIG. 2. Sequence of CAPPI maps at 10-min intervals showing the evolution of the smoke plume. The base map is simplified, indicating only the islands of Montreal and Laval. Some of the small, faint echoes south of the profiler site (letter *P*) are ground clutter, not echoes from the plume.

site of the profiler and the VPR. Hourly winds measured by the profiler indicated a northwesterly flow of approximately  $8 \text{ m s}^{-1}$  at 1.5 km. Although the plume meanders, its overall displacement is consistent with the profiler winds.

### 5. The plume overhead

Figure 3 is an 8-h time-height record of reflectivity measured by the VPR. The reflectivity is expressed in terms of the rain-equivalent reflectivity factor using (1). The minimum value plotted is  $-15 \text{ dBZ}$ . The weak and spotty echoes up to about 2 km are believed to be primarily due to insects. Unmistakable are the stronger echoes starting just after 1300 EST and sometimes extending from nearly 3 km down to the ground. The core

reflectivities in these columns exceed  $10 \text{ dBZ}$ . The stronger echoes are clearly associated with the smoke plume as it passed over the McGill campus.

Figure 4 focuses on the period 1300–1500 EST which includes the strongest echoes from the smoke plume, and compares the VPR data with the reflectivities measured in the vertical beam of the wind profiler. The high-resolution VPR data indicate an extremely grainy pattern of reflectivity, much rougher than the patterns observed in precipitation, showing that the smoke plume is a highly irregular scattering medium. Although the resolution of the profiler in height and time is coarser than the VPR, there is nevertheless an obvious similarity between the two patterns. However, the profiler-measured reflectivity factors in the echo cores are stronger than those measured by the VPR by as much as  $20 \text{ dBZ}$  or more. Collocated with the profiler and VPR is a laser ceilometer (Vaisala model CT-12K). The only detectable echo on the ceilometer during this time period was one at 2.1 km of about a 2-min duration at 1332 EST. This falls within the time and height interval of the strong radar echoes and might be an indication of the smoke plume. On the other hand, there were a few wisps of cloud in the sky, and the ceilometer echo may only indicate a passing cloud. Right away it should be noted as curious that a smoke trail, ordinarily thought of as consisting of particles with sizes on the order of micrometers, would be detectable by radars with wavelengths of 3, 10, and 33 cm, but not by the ceilometer with a wavelength of  $0.9 \mu\text{m}$ . A possible explanation of the observations is that the radar plume was composed of rather large particles, presumably ash, debris, and other products of incomplete combustion, all

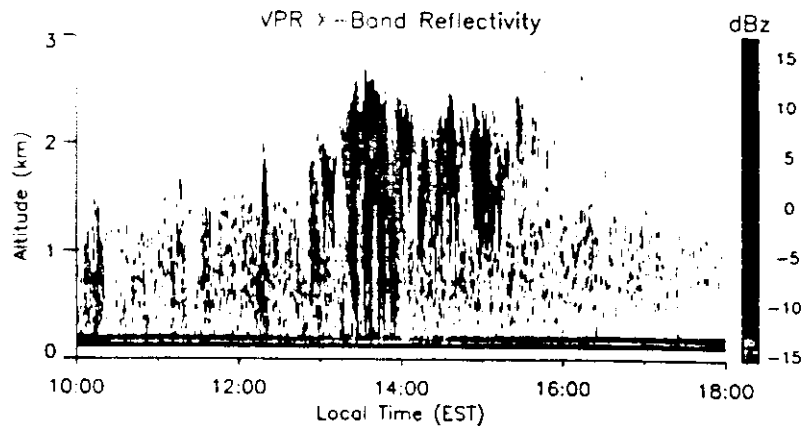


FIG. 3. Time-height pattern of reflectivity measured by the VPR. The resolution of the data in this plot is 30 m in altitude and 30 s in time. The strong echoes from about 1315 to 1530 EST are associated with the plume.

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<sup>°C</sup> <sup>°C</sup> <sup>True</sup> <sup>m/sec</sup> <sup>meters</sup>

LEVEL	TEMP	DEW PT	DIR	SPEED	HEIGHT
1015.0	27.8	20.8	240.0	2.5	20.0
1000.0	27.2	18.2	255.0	4.6	152.3
982.9	26.1	16.9	270.0	6.6	304.0
949.4	23.9	14.2	280.0	7.7	609.0
925.0	22.2	12.2	285.0	8.7	837.5
916.8	21.5	11.9	285.0	9.2	914.0
884.9	18.6	10.7	290.0	9.7	1219.0
850.0	15.4	9.4	305.0	10.2	1564.9
823.8	13.5	8.0	310.0	10.8	1829.0
794.5	11.3	6.3	315.0	9.7	2134.0
793.0	11.2	6.2	315.3	9.6	2150.4
766.0	10.3	-1.4	320.0	8.2	2439.0
757.0	10.0	-4.0	323.3	7.7	2538.0
748.0	9.2	1.2	326.5	7.2	2637.3
738.5	8.4	1.7	330.0	6.6	2743.0
723.0	7.2	2.4	332.9	6.3	2918.6
711.7	6.3	0.9	335.0	6.1	3048.0
700.0	5.4	-0.6	325.0	6.1	3184.2
699.0	5.4	-0.6	324.7	6.1	3196.0
686.0	5.2	-12.8	320.1	6.1	3349.5
685.7	5.2	-12.9	320.0	6.1	3353.0
676.0	4.4	-16.6	310.5	6.9	3469.2
660.4	3.3	-17.0	295.0	8.2	3658.0
636.0	1.5	-17.6	290.0	8.7	3963.0
634.0	1.4	-17.6	290.8	8.8	3988.5
612.3	0.8	-20.4	300.0	9.7	4268.0
586.0	0.0	-24.0	302.9	10.9	4620.7
567.3	-1.9	-23.0	305.0	11.8	4878.0
545.9	-4.2	-21.8	315.0	15.9	5182.0
530.0	-5.9	-20.9	315.0	17.1	5416.5
500.0	-9.3	-28.3	315.0	19.5	5870.1
485.5	-10.4	-30.2	310.0	20.0	6097.0
466.6	-11.8	-32.7	305.0	20.5	6402.0
465.0	-11.9	-32.9	304.8	20.5	6428.6
400.0	-22.5	-35.5	295.0	20.5	7558.2
396.5	-23.0	-36.0	295.0	20.5	7621.0
363.9	-27.9	-40.6	295.0	20.5	8231.0
319.9	-35.2	-47.5	305.0	20.0	9146.0
306.5	-37.7	-49.8	315.0	19.0	9451.0
300.0	-38.9	-50.9	315.0	19.0	9602.3
286.0	-41.9	-51.9	300.8	18.6	9928.2
280.4	-42.7	-52.9	295.0	18.5	10060.0
256.0	-46.5	-57.3	280.0	21.0	10670.0
250.0	-47.5	-58.5	280.0	21.6	10828.8
200.0	-58.1	-67.1	310.0	24.6	12269.6
182.0	-56.5	-65.5	313.6	29.0	12866.1
175.1	-57.2	-66.2	315.0	30.8	13109.0
151.4	-59.9	-68.9	300.0	25.7	14024.0
150.0	-60.1	-69.1	300.0	25.7	14083.4
133.0	-61.9	-70.9	312.9	23.4	14831.2
124.5	-60.8	-69.8	320.0	22.1	15243.0
118.5	-59.9	-68.9	320.0	20.0	15548.0
117.0	-59.7	-68.7	318.7	19.3	15628.7
102.3	-61.8	-70.8	305.0	12.3	16463.0
100.0	-62.1	-71.1	305.0	11.3	16605.1
93.3	-62.5	-71.5			17033.6
25.9	-49.7	-62.7			25184.4

JFK 254 at 44 N miles from Upton

Acc. site ~ 15 N miles SE of Upton

24  
20  
17  
31  
30  
29  
30  
33  
34  
33

32  
**43**

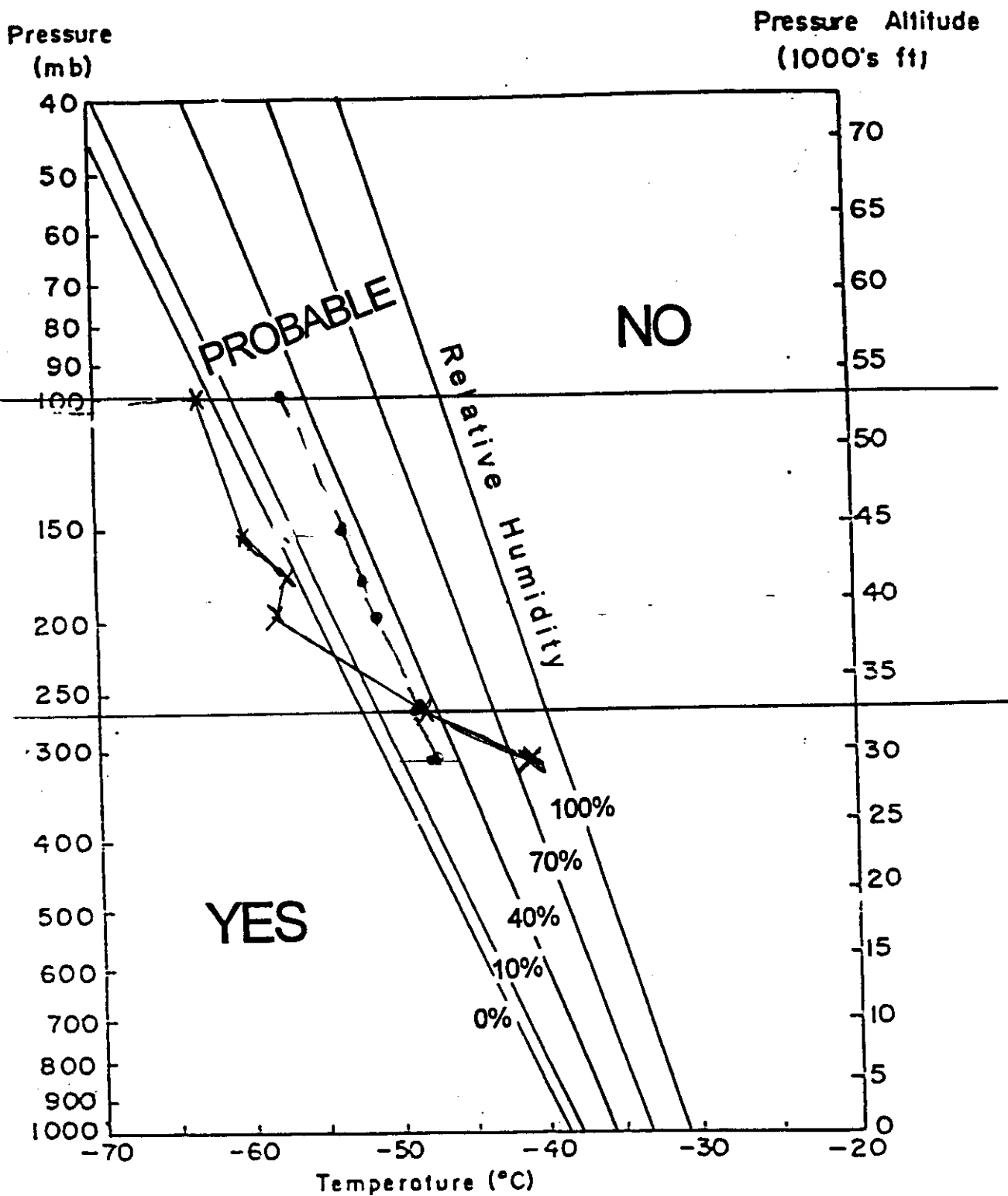


Figure 9. Low-Bypass Engine Contrail Algorithm.

44

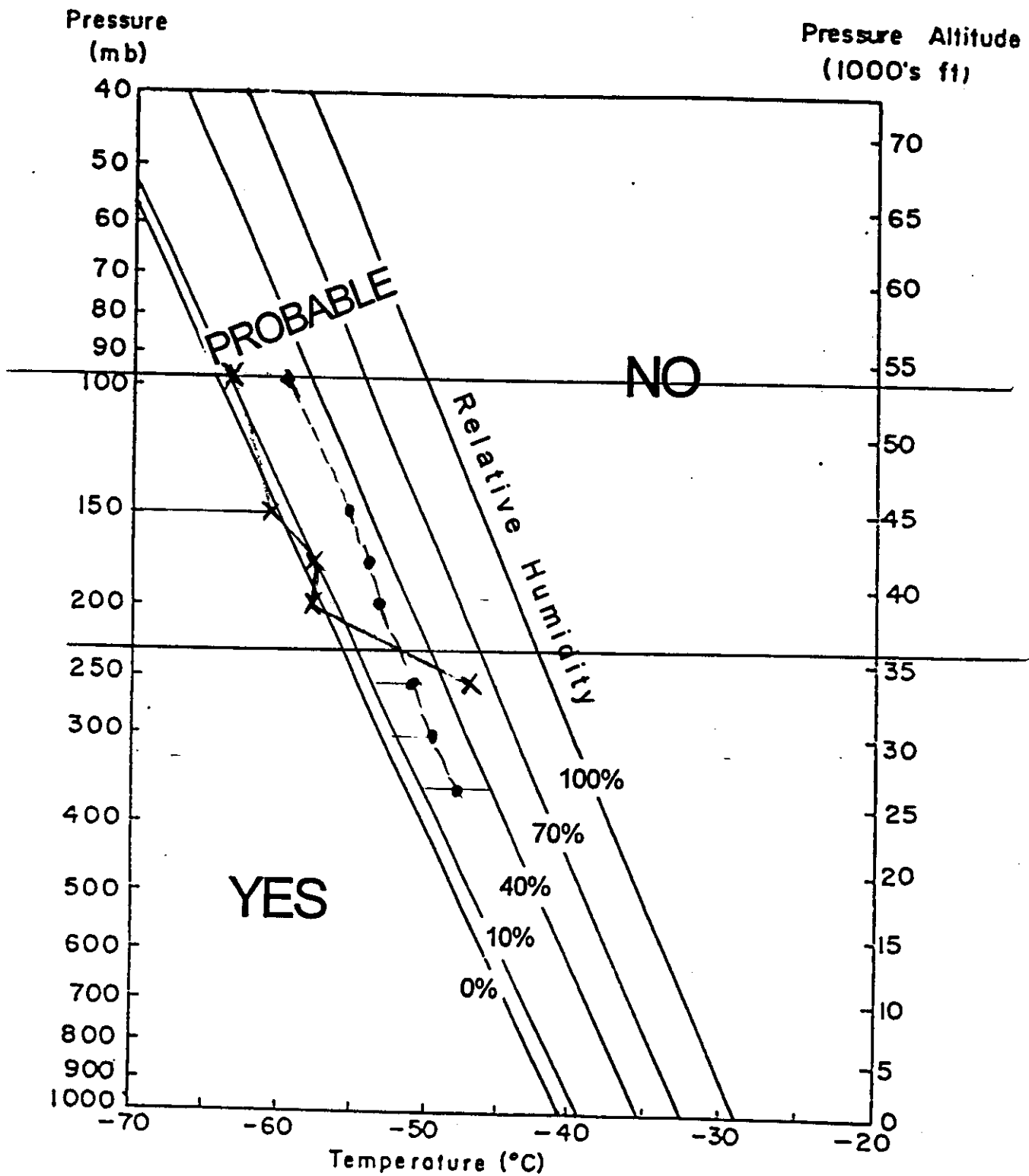


Figure 8. Non-Bypass Engine Contrail Algorithm

45

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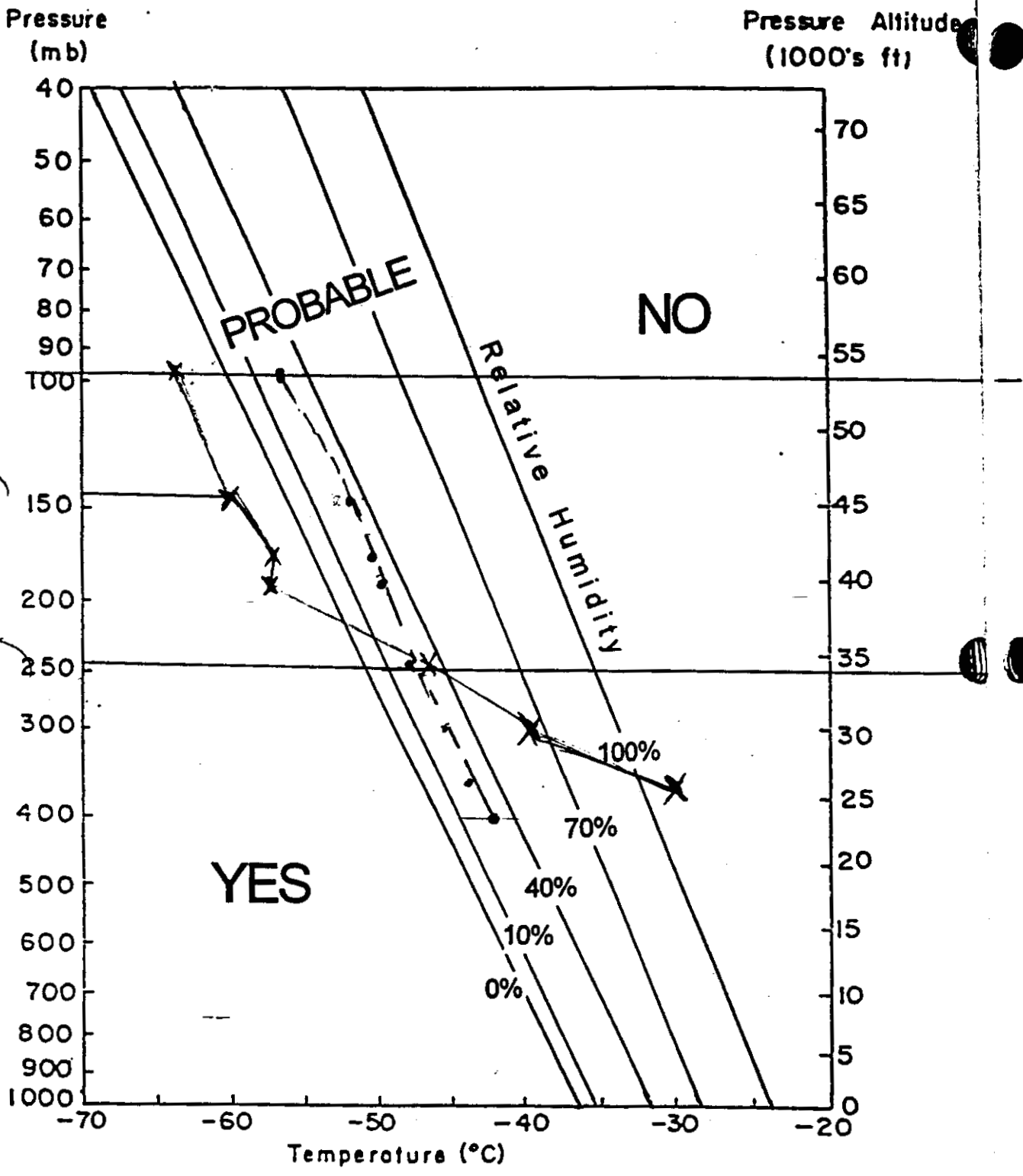


Figure 10. High-Bypass Engine Contrail Algorithm.

46