

NASA marks 25th anniversary of Challenger accident

January 28 2011, By MARCIA DUNN , AP Aerospace Writer



National Aeronautics and Space Administration Administrator (NASA) Charles Bolden lays a wreath at a Challenger memorial, at Arlington National Cemetery, in Arlington, Va., Thursday, Jan. 27, 2011, in commemoration of NASA's National Day of Remembrance. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

(AP) -- Twenty-five years ago, seven astronauts died aboard space shuttle Challenger [when it exploded shortly after liftoff](#).

NASA officials will gather at Florida's Kennedy Space Center on Friday morning to mark the somber anniversary. Special guests include the widow of Challenger's commander, June Scobee Rodgers.

She'll be the featured speaker at the outdoor ceremony. Her husband, Dick Scobee, died along with his six crewmates on Jan. 28, 1986. Schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe was among the dead.

Rodgers was instrumental in establishing the Challenger Center for Space Science Education.

The ceremony will take place at the Space Mirror Memorial, a granite monument bearing the names of all 24 [astronauts](#) who have died in the line of duty.

More information: NASA: <http://history.nasa.gov/sts51l.html>

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Citation: NASA marks 25th anniversary of Challenger accident (2011, January 28) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-01-nasa-25th-anniversary-accident.html>

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