Microwave Radiometers for Small Satellites

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Overview

- **Motivation**
- Microwave Radiometers
- MiRaTA
- MicroMAS
- TROPICS

Motivation: Predicting the Weather

Hurricane Ike, 2008

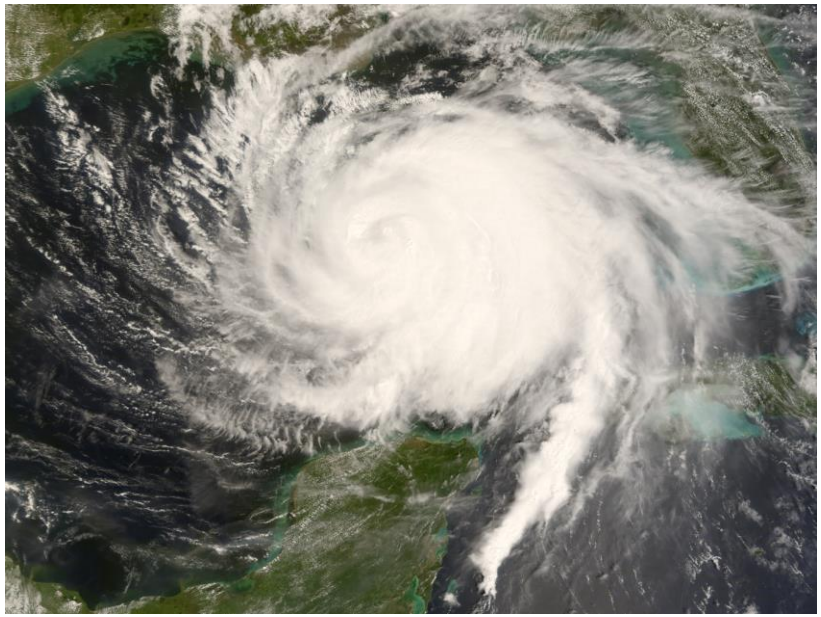


Image: NASA MODIS

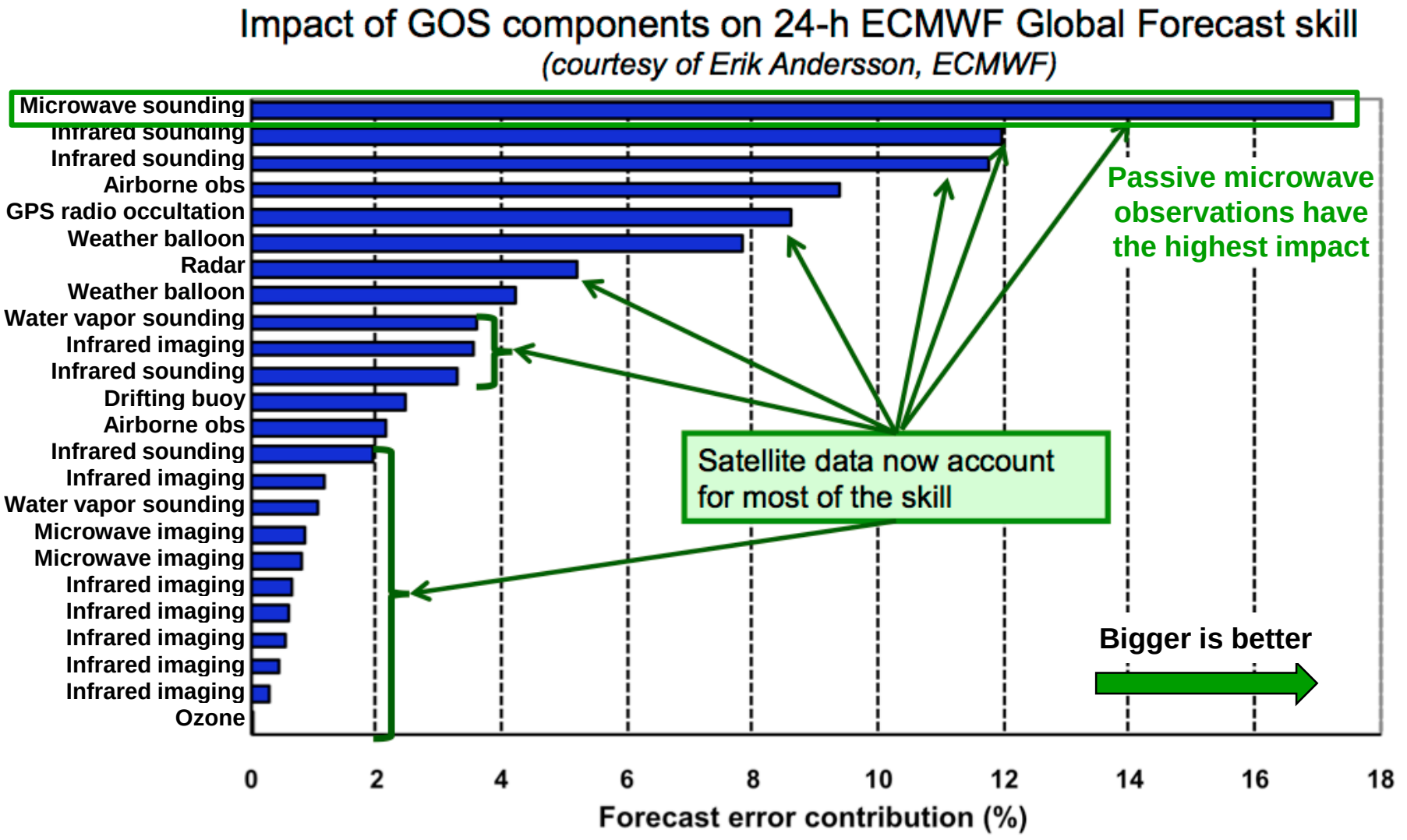
Hurricane Ike damage near Galveston, TX

Image: NY Times

- **The US derives $32 B of value from weather forecasts annually[1]**
- **Satellites that observe Earth drive the forecasts**
- **Need to observe the entire Earth, all the time, with quick availability, of temperature, water vapor, and cloud ice**

[1]University Center for Atmospheric Research

Satellites Provide the Most Forecast Skill



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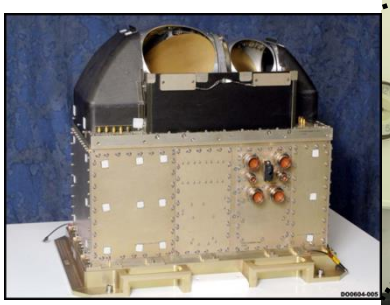
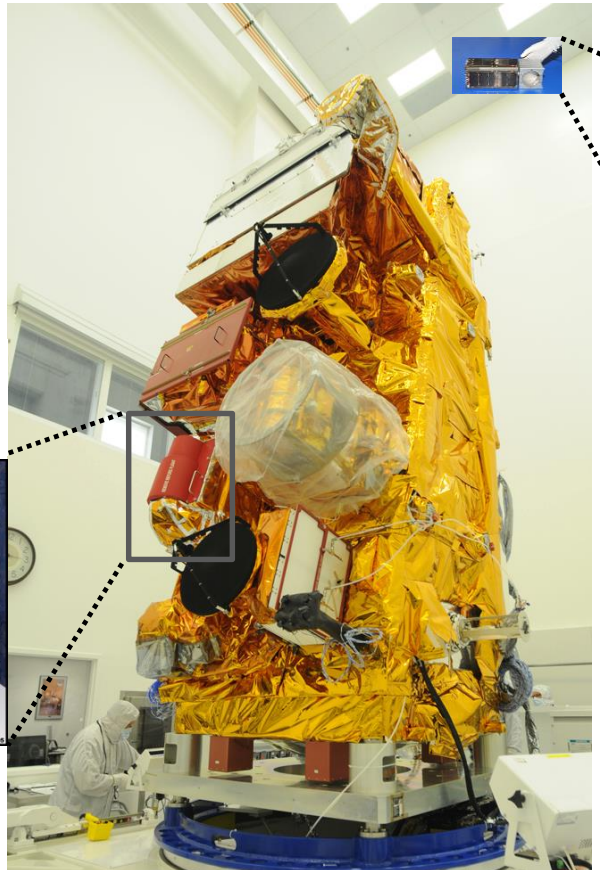
New Approach for Microwave Sounding

Advanced Technology Microwave Sounder (ATMS)



85 kg, 130 W

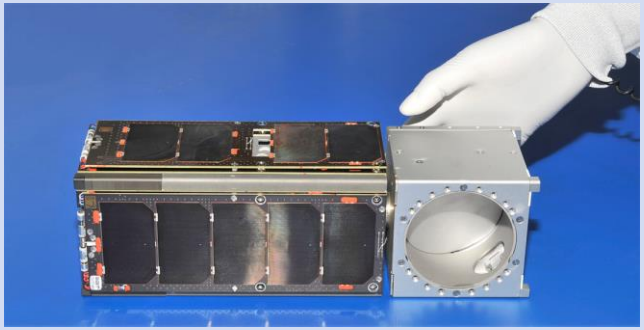


2100 kg **NASA/GSFC**

Suomi NPP Satellite (Launched Oct. 2011)

NPP: National Polar-orbiting Partnership

MicroMAS-1 CubeSat



4.2 kg, 10 W, 34 cm x 10 cm x 10 cm

- **Map ~50 km footprints**
- **Small data stream: 16kbps**
- **Radiometer:**
  - 9 Channels
  - 118 GHz Band (Temperature Measurement)
- **Scan rate: 40 rpm**

Roadmap to a CubeSat Constellation

MicroMAS-1

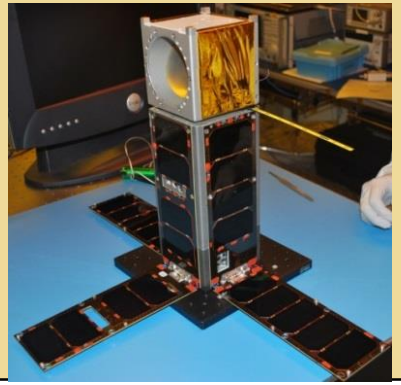
Scanning 3U CubeSat

Intended to measure 3D temperature

Launched in July 2014

ISS released it March 2015

Three successful contacts before radio failed

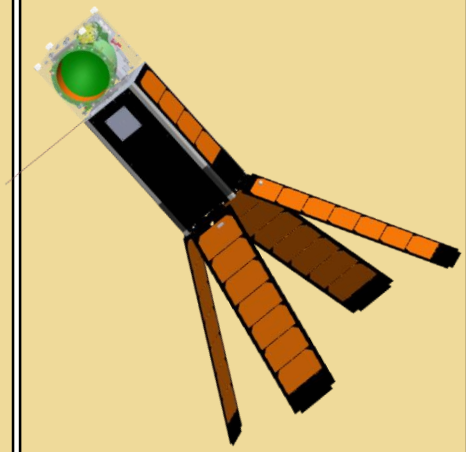


MicroMAS-2

Scanning 3U CubeSat

To measure temperature, water vapor, and cloud ice

Two launches planned in 2017



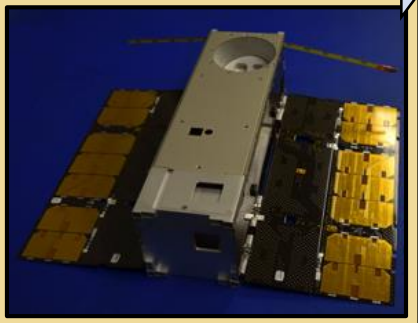
MiRaTA

Pitch-up 3U CubeSat

To measure temperature, water vapor, and cloud ice

GPS radio occultation to enable <1 K calibration

Sept. 2017 launch with JPSS-1



TROPICS

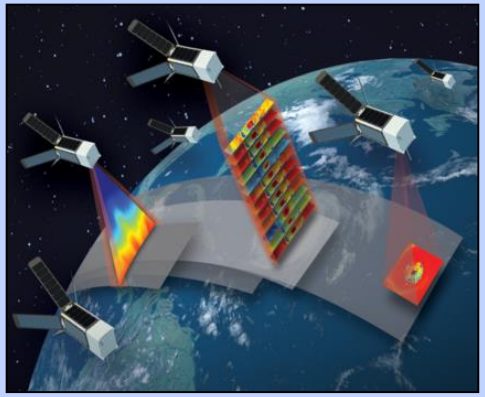
Selected for EVI-3

6-8 CubeSats (3U) in three orbital planes

To measure temperature, water vapor, and cloud ice

30-minute revisit

2020 launch



Sponsored by NASA ESTO

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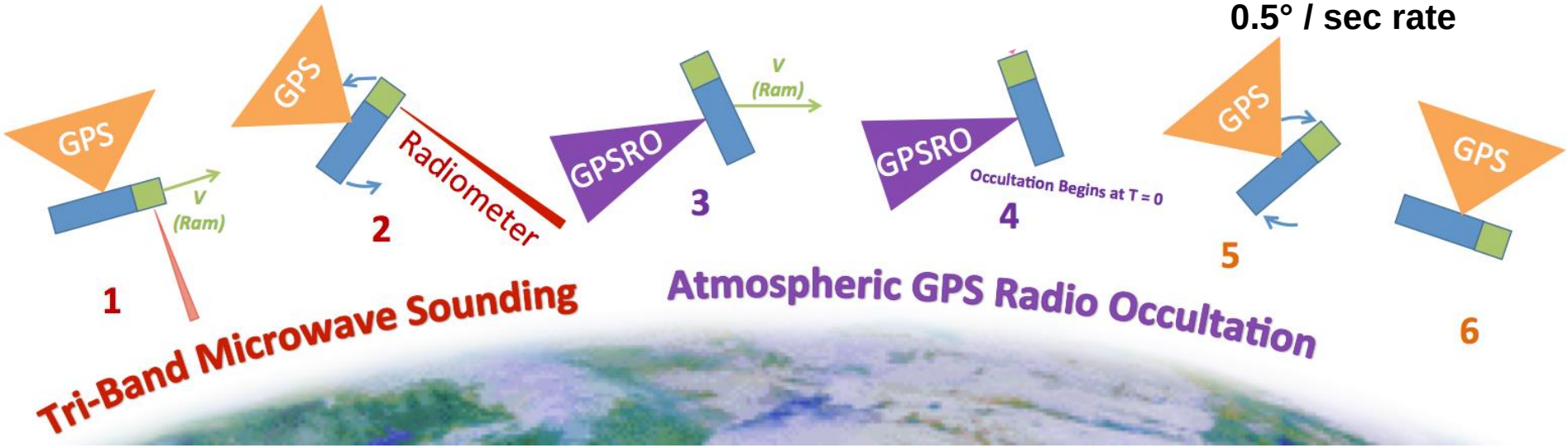
MiRaTA Mission

MiRaTA: Microwave Radiometer Technology Acceleration

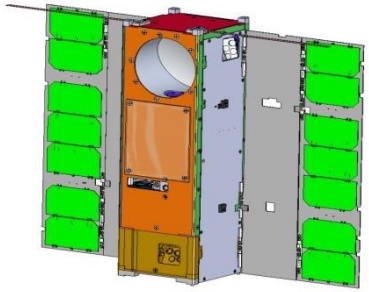
- **Payloads:**
  - Microwave Radiometer:
    - 10 Channels
    - 60 GHz – Temperature
    - 183 GHz – Humidity
    - 206 GHz – Cloud Ice
  - CTAGS: Compact Total Electron Content Atmospheric GPSRO System
    - Provided by Aerospace Corp.
- **Advance TRL from 5 to 7 for:**
  - IF Spectrometer (Radiometer Payload)
  - G-band Mixer (Radiometer Payload)
  - GPSRO Receiver (CTAGS Payload)
- **Microwave radiometer calibration using GPS radio occultation**

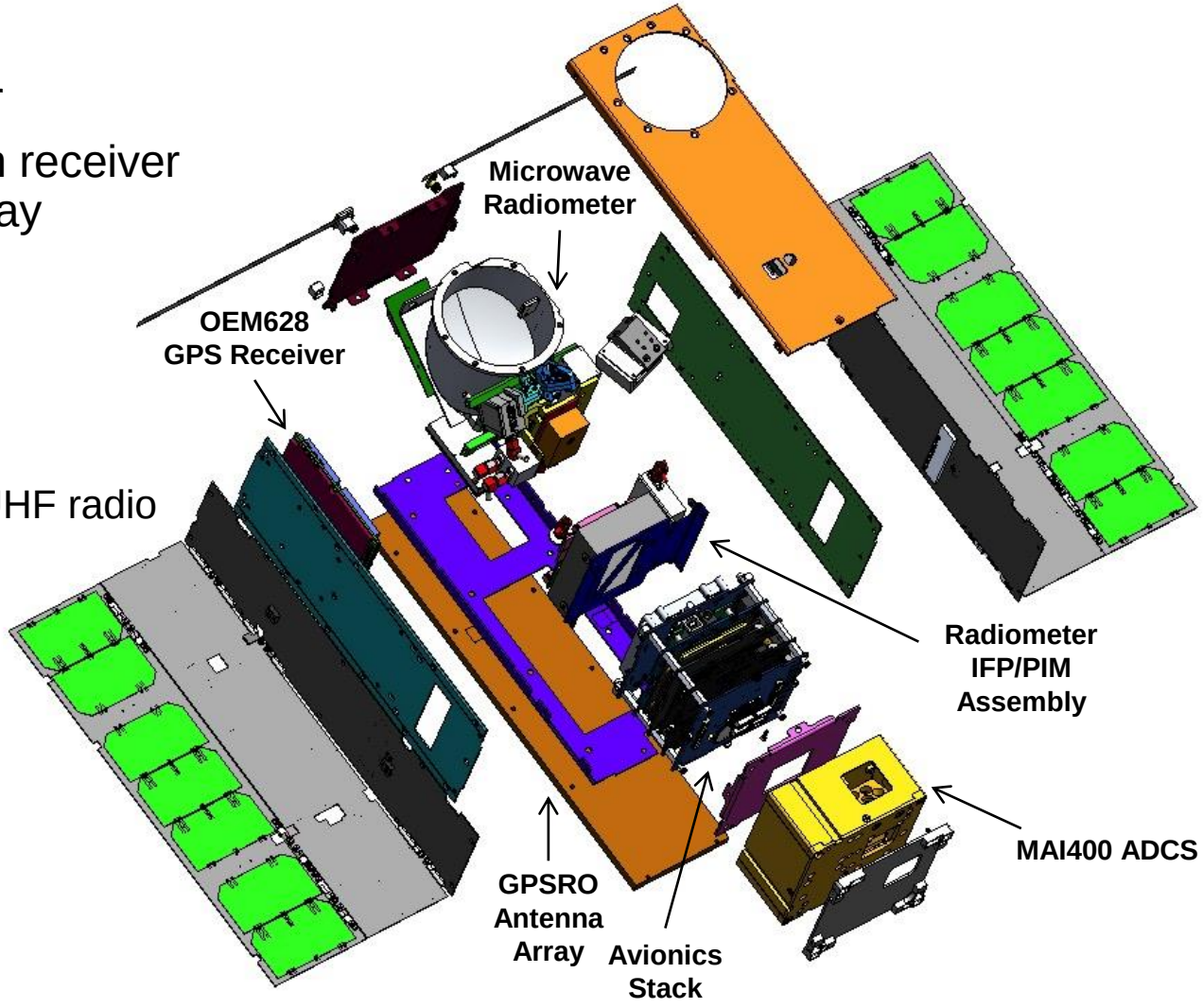
~ 10 minute maneuver
0.5° / sec rate



MiRaTA Space Vehicle

- **Payloads**
  - Microwave Radiometer
  - GPS Radio Occultation receiver and Patch Antenna array (GPSRO or CTAGS)
- **Bus**
  - Cadet UHF Radio
  - Avionics Stack
    - With low data-rate UHF radio and antenna
  - Attitude Determination and Control System

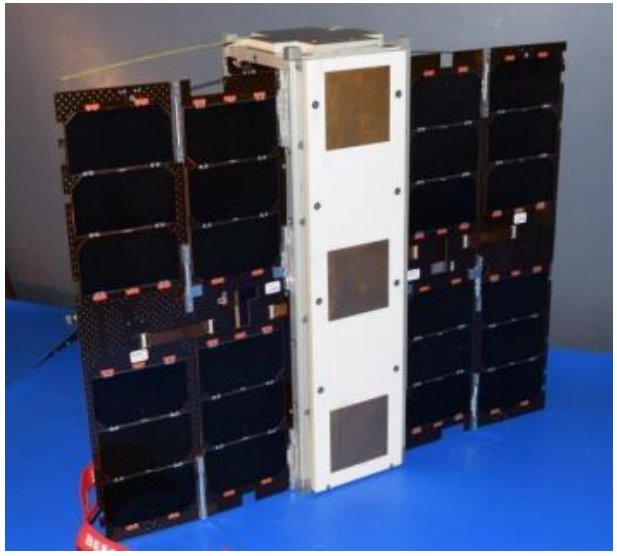




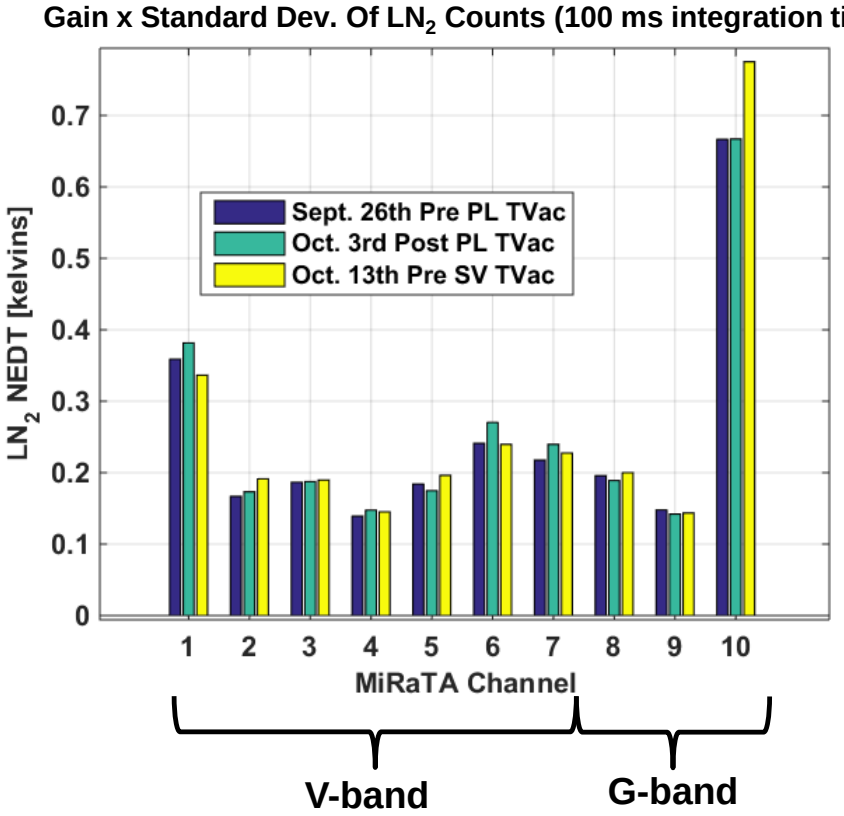
MiRaTA Status

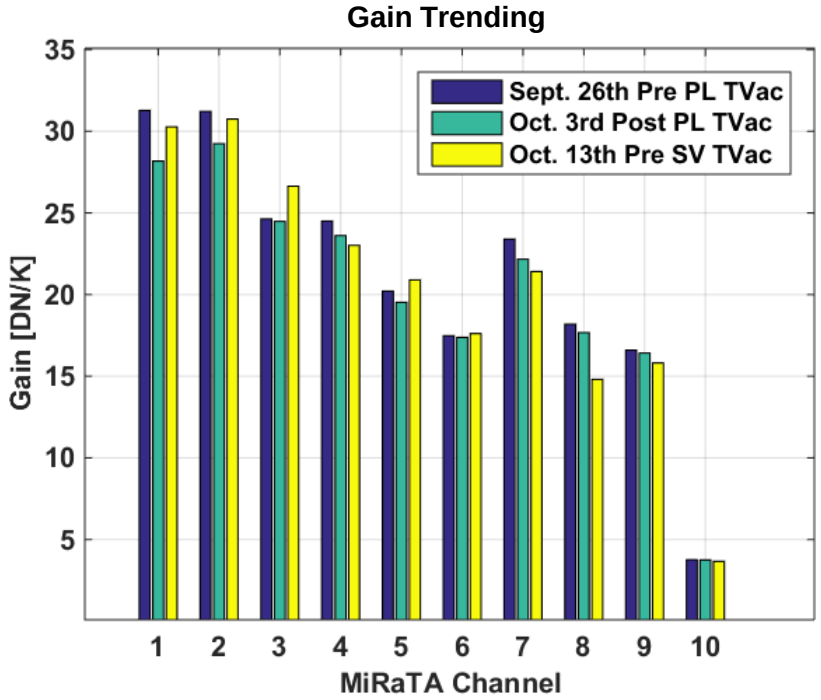
- **Integration and environmental testing complete**
- **Calibration data obtained**
- **Ongoing work**
  - Low-rate UHF radio ground station being built at MIT
  - GSE setup and test at NASA Wallops in conjunction with Utah State SDL
- **Launching with JPSS-1 in Sept. 2017**

Fully Integrated Space Vehicle prior to final solar panel tie down



MiRaTA Radiometer Calibration





Overall, system meets TRL advancement requirements.

Preliminary results show values well within range for:

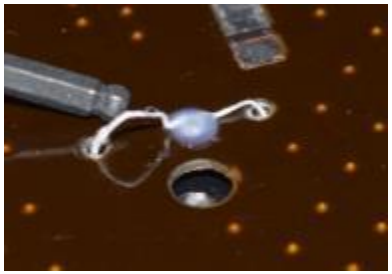
- Gain (accuracy)
- NEDT (precision)

Further processing will address:

- Noise Diode radiance slightly coupled to scene radiance.
- EMI between V and G bands.
- Characterize V-Band matched load radiance.

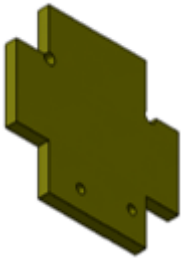
Space Vehicle Integration Issues and Lessons Learned

- **Solar panel tie-down break during vibe**
  - Movement during vibration testing was cut from rubbing on a corner
  - Additional staking was added to the knot to limit its movement
- **CG Location out of spec by 4.6mm**
  - Ballast was added to move it within acceptable bounds
- **Two radiometer channels were unresponsive**
  - Work on these channels was preventing bus and payload integration
  - 10 channels were responsive
  - Due to schedule pressures and the other working channels, this was deemed acceptable for the mission



Broken tie-down

Intact tie-down after vibration testing



CAD model of ballast plate

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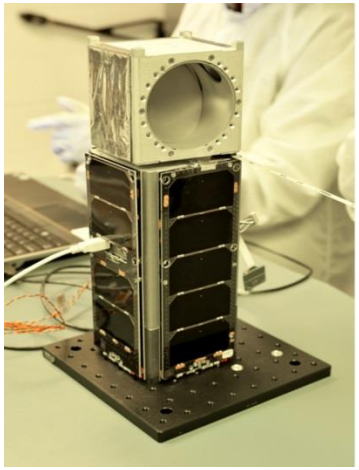
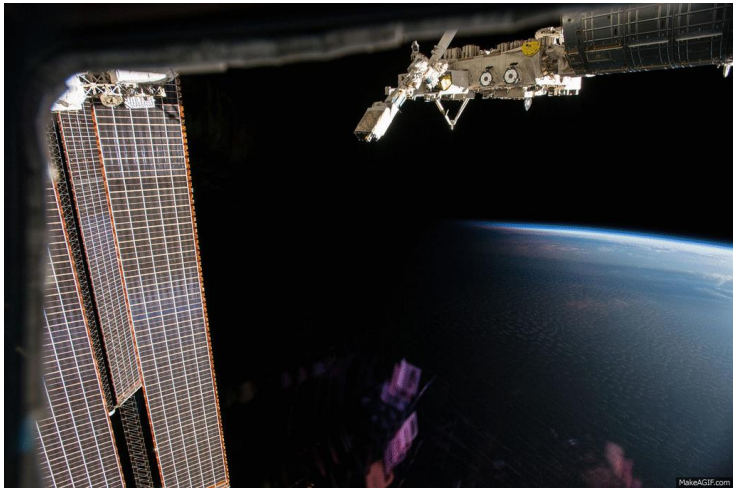
MicroMAS Overview

MicroMAS: Micro-sized Microwave Atmospheric Satellite

- **MicroMAS-1:**
  - 3U dual-spinner CubeSat
  - High resolution cross track spectrometer
  - 9 Channels at the 118 GHz Band
- **MicroMAS-2 is a follow-up mission to MicroMAS-1**
  - 3U dual-spinner CubeSat
  - High resolution cross track spectrometer
  - 10 Channels, 4 bands
    - 89 GHz – water vapor
    - 207 GHz – water vapor
    - 118 GHz – temperature, pressure, precipitation
    - 183 GHz – humidity and precipitation
  - Beam width of 3°
  - Swath of 2500 km
  - Nadir resolution of 20 km



MicroMAS-1 in stowed configuration

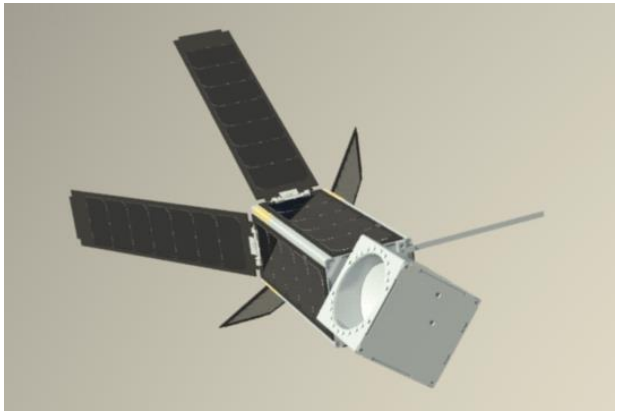


MicroMAS-1 being deployed from the ISS

MicroMAS-2 Status

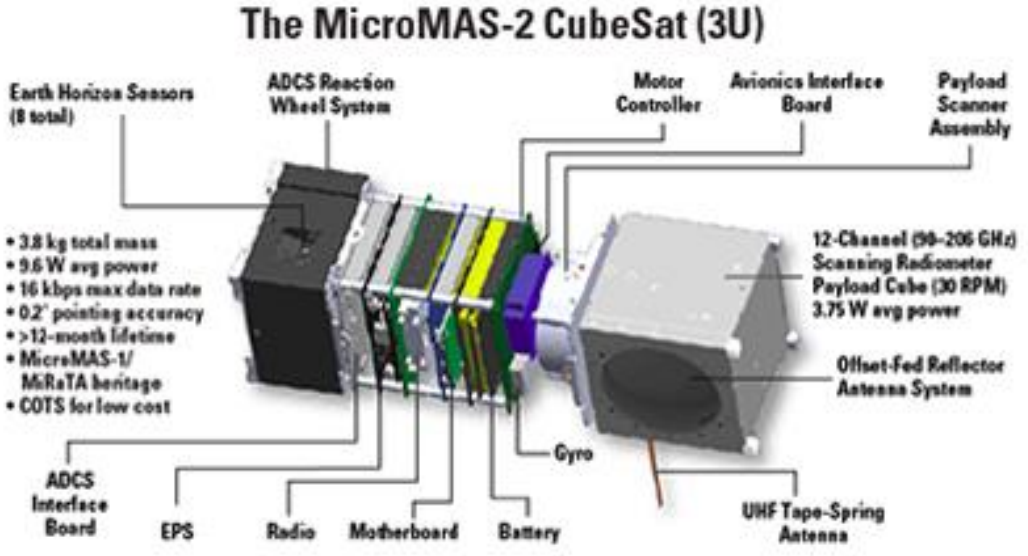
MM-2a:

- Delivery: June 2017
- Launch: September 2017
- Payload integrated and calibrated
- Bus and Scanner integrated and tested
- SV TVac planned for May 2017



MM-2b:

- Delivery: October 2017
- Launch: December 2017
- Integration and test: Jun-Jul 2017
- Payload integrated
- Bus undergoing subsystem testing



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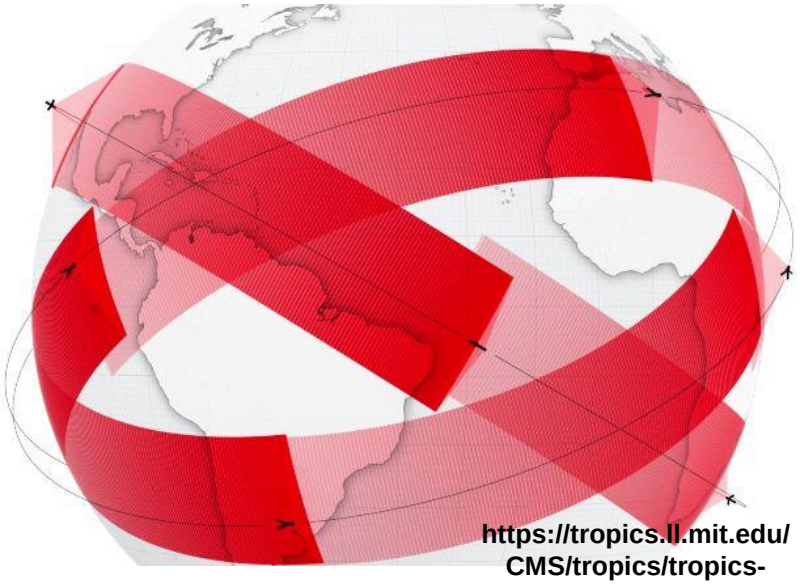
TROPICS Overview

Time-Resolved Observations of Precipitation structure and storm Intensity with a Constellation of Smallsats (TROPICS)

- Provides observations of precipitation, temperature, and humidity with a high-revisit rate in Earth's tropical regions
- Constellation involving at least 6 CubeSats spread over three orbital planes using a commercial 3U bus and radiometer payload
- 30 minute median revisit rates with 12 satellites
- Observations will improve knowledge and forecasting of high-impact tropical cyclones



https://tropics.ll.mit.edu/CMS/tropics/tropics-mission-implementation

TROPICS Status

- **Bus vendor selection in progress**
- **Radiometer payload improvements from MicroMAS-2**
  - Manufacturability
  - Ease of calibration
- **2020 launch expected, likely on a dedicated small satellite launcher**