

Vincent Associates®, UNIBLITZ®, Shutter in Space Aboard the French PICARD Satellite

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Rochester, NY - September 2, 2010 - Vincent Associates®, a Rochester based Photonics Manufacturing firm, has one of its 35mm aperture VS35 shutter products, aboard the French PICARD satellite. The prime contractor for PICARD is CNES (Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales). PICARD was successfully launched on June 15, 2010 aboard a Russian DNEPR launcher along with the PRISMA Satellites built by the SSC (Swedish Space Corporation).

The electronic shutter in operation aboard PICARD is an off-the-shelf, 35mm aperture, VS type, modified for this particular space flight application. The shutter has been tested to survive the shock, vibration and environmental extremes to allow it to be the choice for this application. The shutter has also been qualified to survive a minimum of 1,330,000 exposures.

The VS35 shutter is used in the SODISM instrument which stands for Solar Diameter Imager and Surface Mapper: an imaging telescope accurately pointed, and a CCD (Charge Coupled Device) used to measure the solar diameter and shape with an accuracy of a few milliarcseconds. According to Mustapha Meftah of CNRS-LATMOS "SODISM is an 11-cm Ritchey-Chrétien imaging telescope, developed at CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) by LATMOS (Laboratoire Atmosphères, Milieux, Observations Spatiales) and contains a 2K x 2K CCD, taking solar images at five wavelengths. The shutter performs a variety of functions; however, its main function is to provide CCD exposures at specified wavelengths. The VS35 shutter provides exposure times between 0.5 second to 16 seconds."

The PICARD satellite took its first successful photograph of the sun on July 22, 2010 at 16h12. It is a raw image, level L0, thus obtained before processing, at 607.1 nm wavelength in a very narrow band of 0.7 nm width. For additional information on this first photograph, visit the PICARD website at smc.cnes.fr/PICARD/index.htm and click on the News tab.

According to Stephen Pasquarella of Vincent Associates, "UNIBLITZ® shutters have been used in other space-borne applications in the past. Our 35mm, VS35 type shutter was a part of the SOLSE (in 1997) and SOLSE-2 (in 2003) experiment packages aboard the Space Shuttle, and our 25mm shutters, VS25 type devices, flew to Halley's Comet aboard the Vega Probes in 1986. These are just a few of the many applications for which UNIBLITZ® shutters have been selected."

Vincent Associates® is the manufacturer of UNIBLITZ® electronic shutters and shutter systems based in Rochester, NY, with distribution centers worldwide. Vincent Associates® provides shutter solutions to a wide variety of consumers after rigorous testing to ensure application with confidence. Visit their site at www.uniblitz.com or call (585) 385-5930 to learn more about products offered by UNIBLITZ® and how they may help.

For more than 40 years, Vincent Associates® has been supplying the UNIBLITZ® electro-programmable shutter systems worldwide, addressing numerous demanding applications.

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