

# Where Were you When...?

People normally remember the big happenings in their lives as well as big world news in categories, where were you when president Kennedy was shot or when the first plane crashed to the WTC twin towers in New York.

Unfortunately we experienced a similar situation during the Christmas holidays namely the earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean that affected not only the countries that were directly affected but the whole mankind.

By Prof. Dr-Ing. Holger Magel

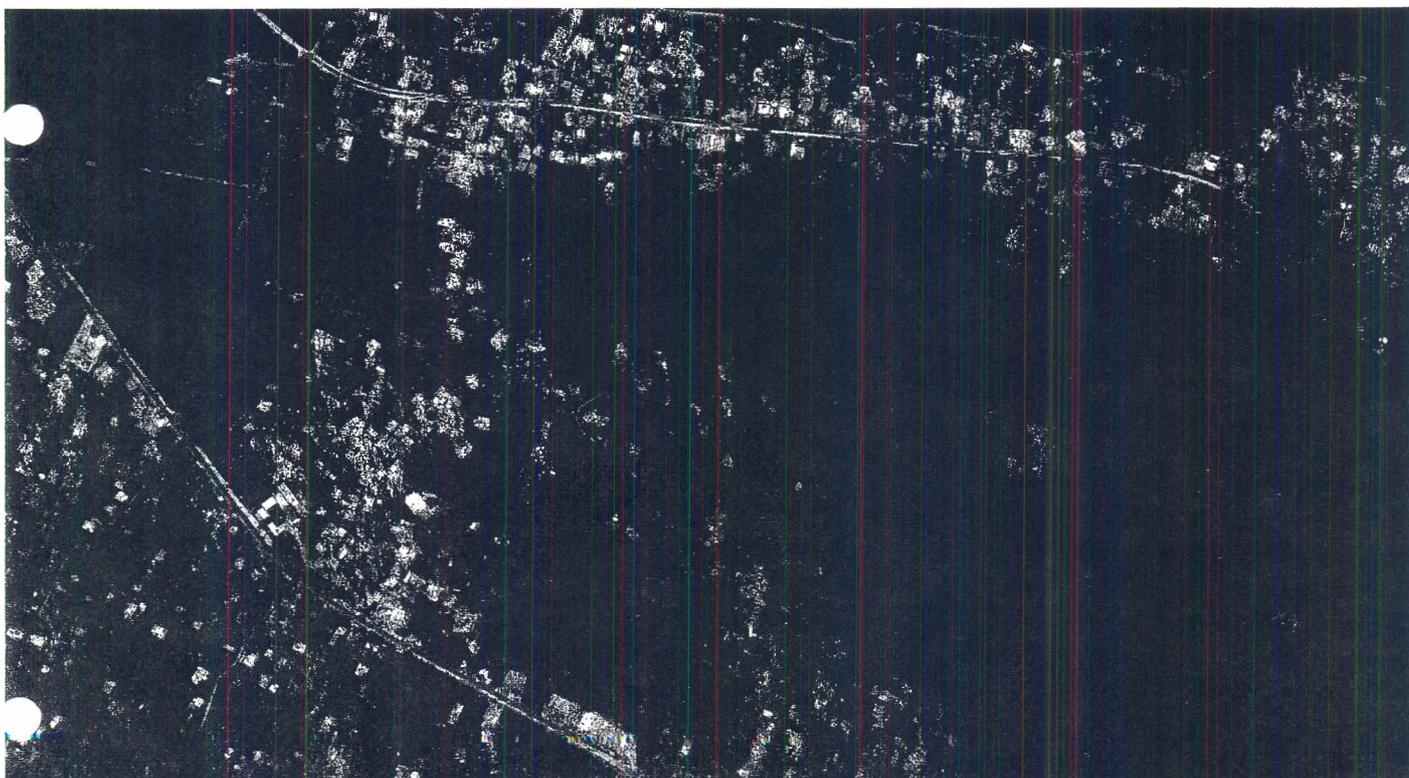


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Nearly everybody was part of the catastrophe because we all know people who were spending their holidays or working in the region. This shared experience resulted in humanitarian help as never before. It is a human feature that it is much easier to help those who have suffered most if you are directly or indirectly involved in a disaster. Now some weeks after the disaster it is time to consider what should be done and what could have been done to avoid catastrophes like this in the future. It is clear that there is very little that man can do when nature takes over, but with modern technology, monitoring and early warning systems and new communication technology we should have been able to make more.

## Contacts and Ideas

I have been emotionally affected by all contacts and ideas that have been distributed by the professionals after the disaster. There seems to be a real interest among surveyors, geodesists, geoinformation experts etc. to help overcome the situation. Many questions have been put to the International Federation of Surveyors and other NGOs about their role in helping to rebuild those countries affected by the tsunami and how



Banda Aceh flooding... (Image Courtesy DigitGlobe).