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Liquid Propulsion History Session



Integrity ★ Service ★ Excellence

AIAA JPC

Advances in Turbopump Technology

10 Jul 2018

Alan M. Sutton

AFRL/RQRE

**Air Force Research Laboratory
Space & Missile Propulsion Division**



Outline



Turbopump Assembly

- **Turbopump Introduction**
- **Turbopump Beginnings**
- **Heritage**
 - 1950's, 1960's, 1980's, Today
- **Turbopump Cavitation Limits**
- **Multi-Speed Shaft Design**
- **Historical Trends**
- **Summary**

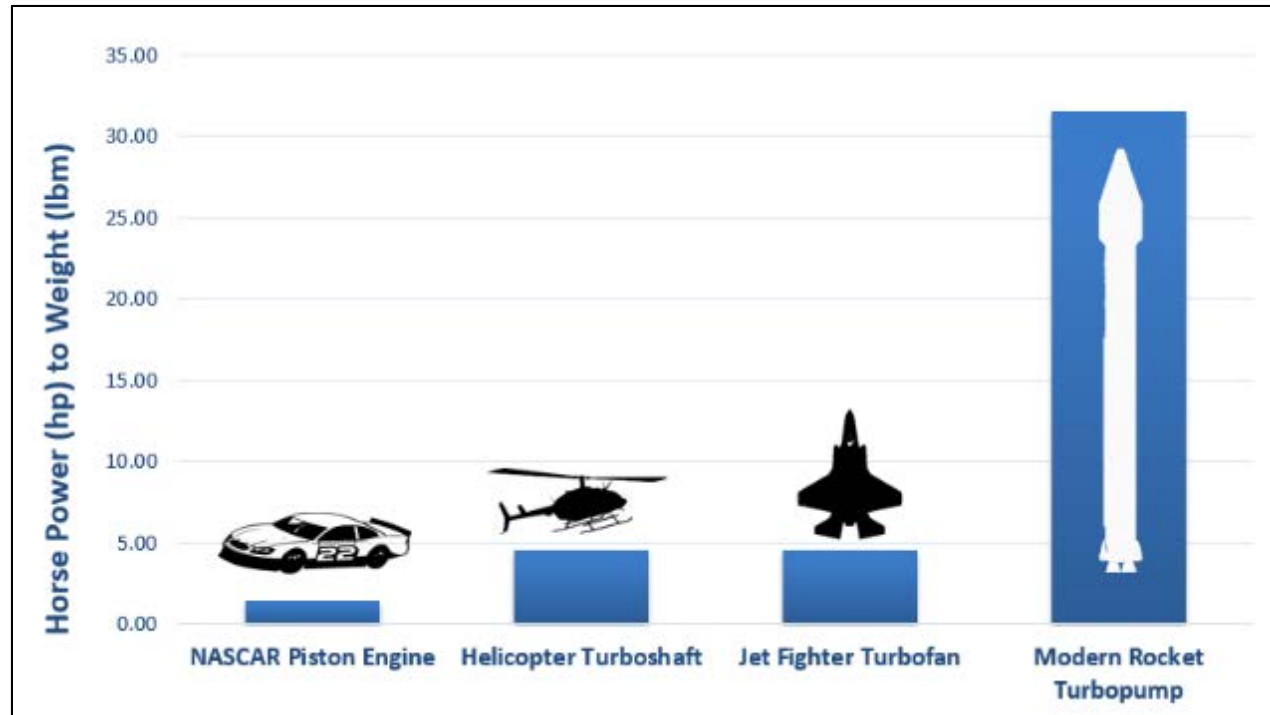


Power Density of Various Machinery



- The high power to weight ratio created challenges:

- Rotordynamics
- Thrust balance
- Structures
- Thermal
- Hydrodynamics
- Aerodynamics
- Bearings & seals



Rocket Turbopumps Highest Horsepower to Weight of Any Machine



First Generation of Turbopumps



- **“Boilerfeed” turbopumps have been utilized in steam systems for over a century**
- **Robert Goddard created the first rocket turbopump based on “boilerfeed” design**
 - **Classic design includes a centrifugal pump and axial turbine**
 - **This basic configuration continues today with the addition of more pump and turbine stages**
- **Early designs were derivatives of water pumps or gas turbines**
 - **Poorly optimized for real propellant proper**



Robert Goddard's First Generation Turbopump



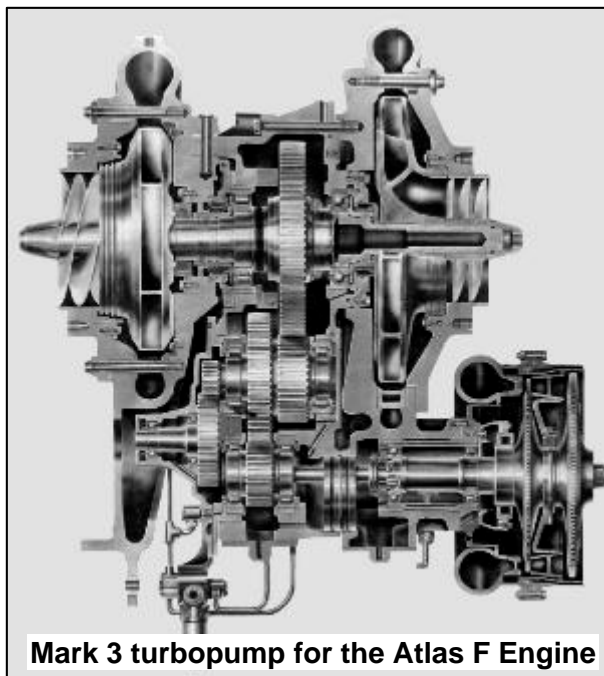
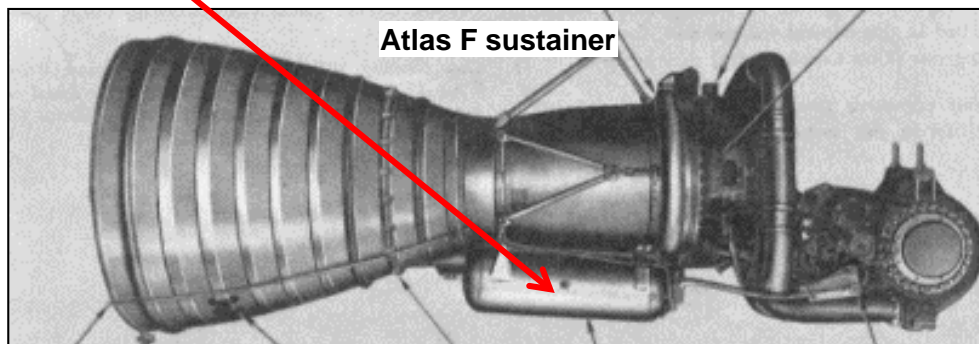
1950's Turbopump Heritage



• 1950's Atlas & Thor Turbopump

- Challenge with bearing lube freezing during LOX chill-in
 - Not a major issue for liquid ICBM version
 - Limited Launch Vehicle hold times
- Gas Generator Cycle
 - Extremely sensitive to TP efficiency
- Two Shaft design
 - Oxidizer & fuel pumps on one shaft
 - Turbine & auxiliary drive another shaft
- Different speeds achieved via a complex gear box
- Separate lube tank

Separate Lube Tank



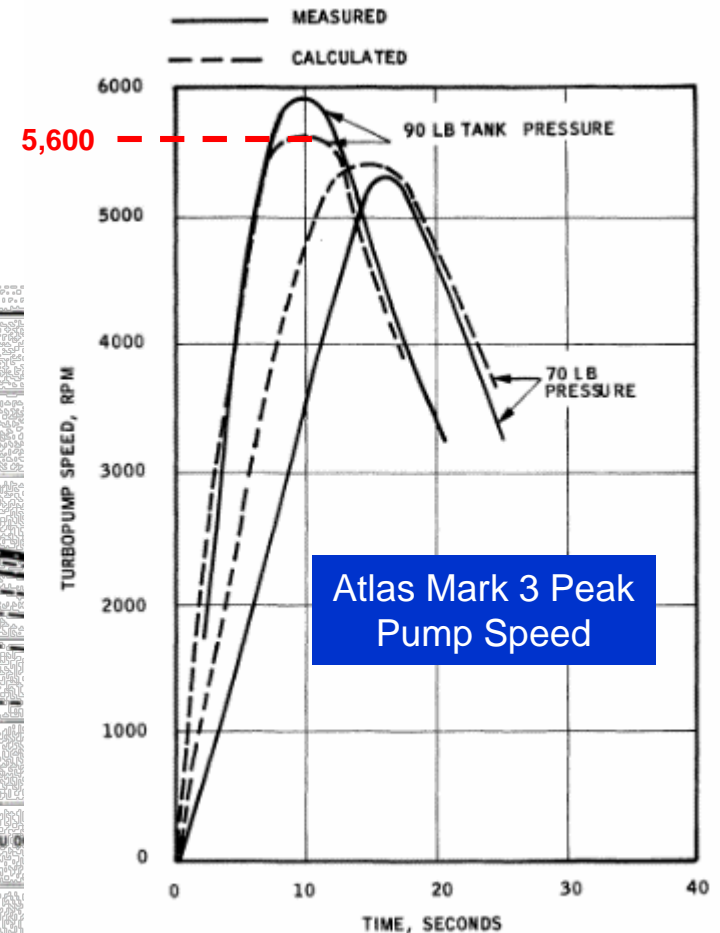
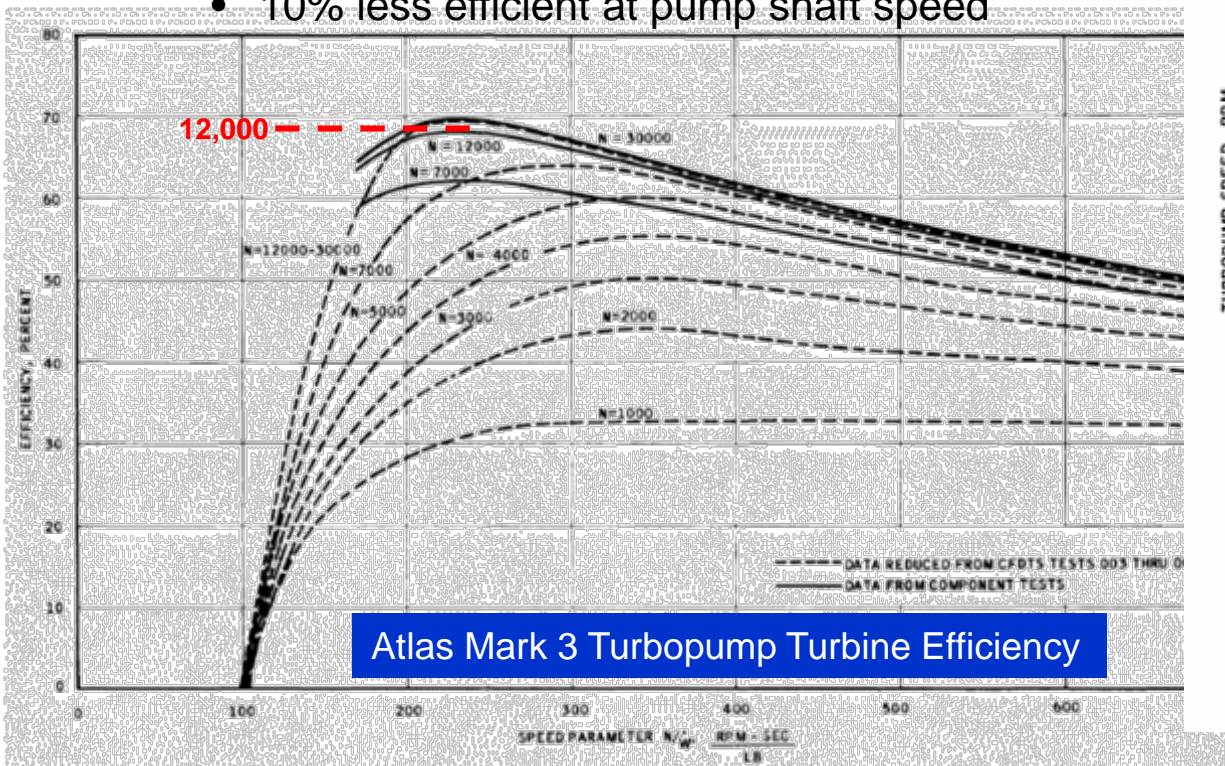


Atlas & Thor Turbopumps



• Early turbopump gear box allow pump & turbine to operate at different speeds

- Pump speed limited by suction performance NPSH 5,600 RPM
- Turbine speed over 12,000 RPM
 - 10% less efficient at pump shaft speed



COMPARISON OF CALCULATED AND MEASURED PUMP SPEED





1960's Turbopump Heritage



• 1960's H-1 & F-1

Turbopump

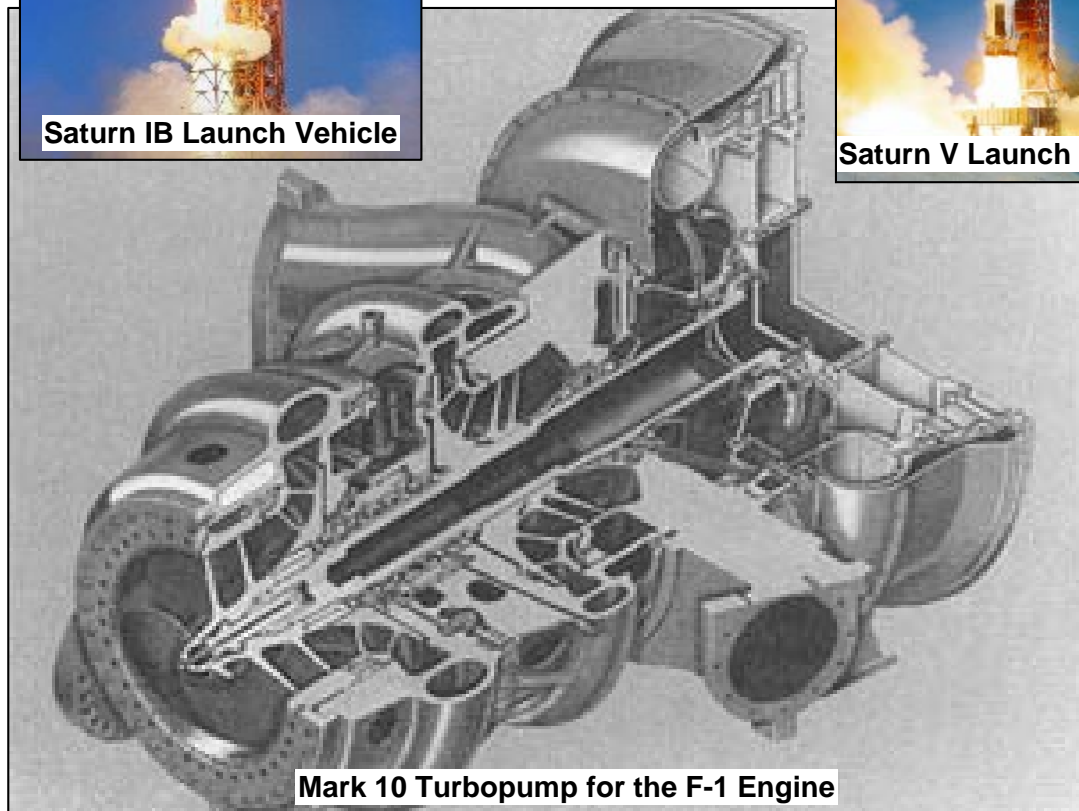
- Gas Generator Cycle
- Single shaft with oxidizer, fuel pump, and turbine mounted same shaft
- New bearing materials allowed fuel to be used as lubricant on all bearings
- Fuel lubricated bearings still had freezing problem
 - Ground powered heater added to mitigate fuel bearing freezing



Saturn IB Launch Vehicle



Saturn V Launch Vehicle



Mark 10 Turbopump for the F-1 Engine

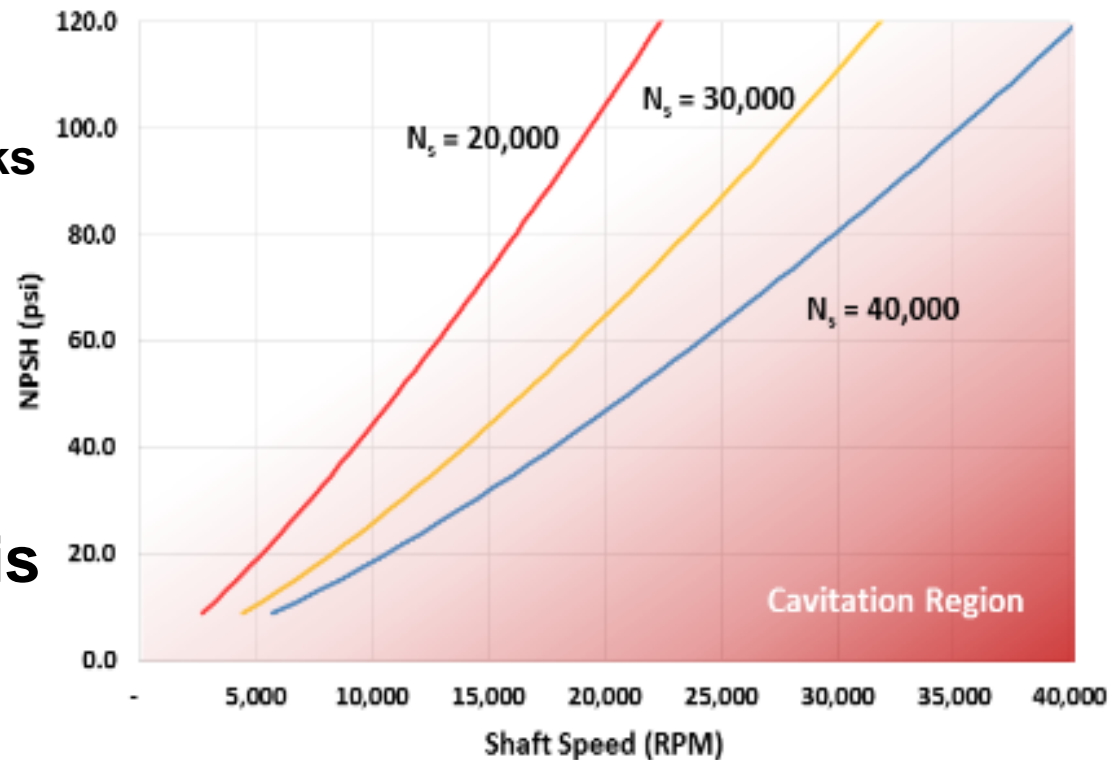
**Shaft Speed Still Limited by
Suction Performance - NPSH**



Cavitation is a Limit to Rotational Shaft Speed



- High tank pressure drivers down vehicle mass fraction and increases weight of Launch
 - Thicker wall propellant tanks
 - More pressurant gas
- For a given Specific Speed (N_s) the cavitation limit is directly proportional to shaft speed



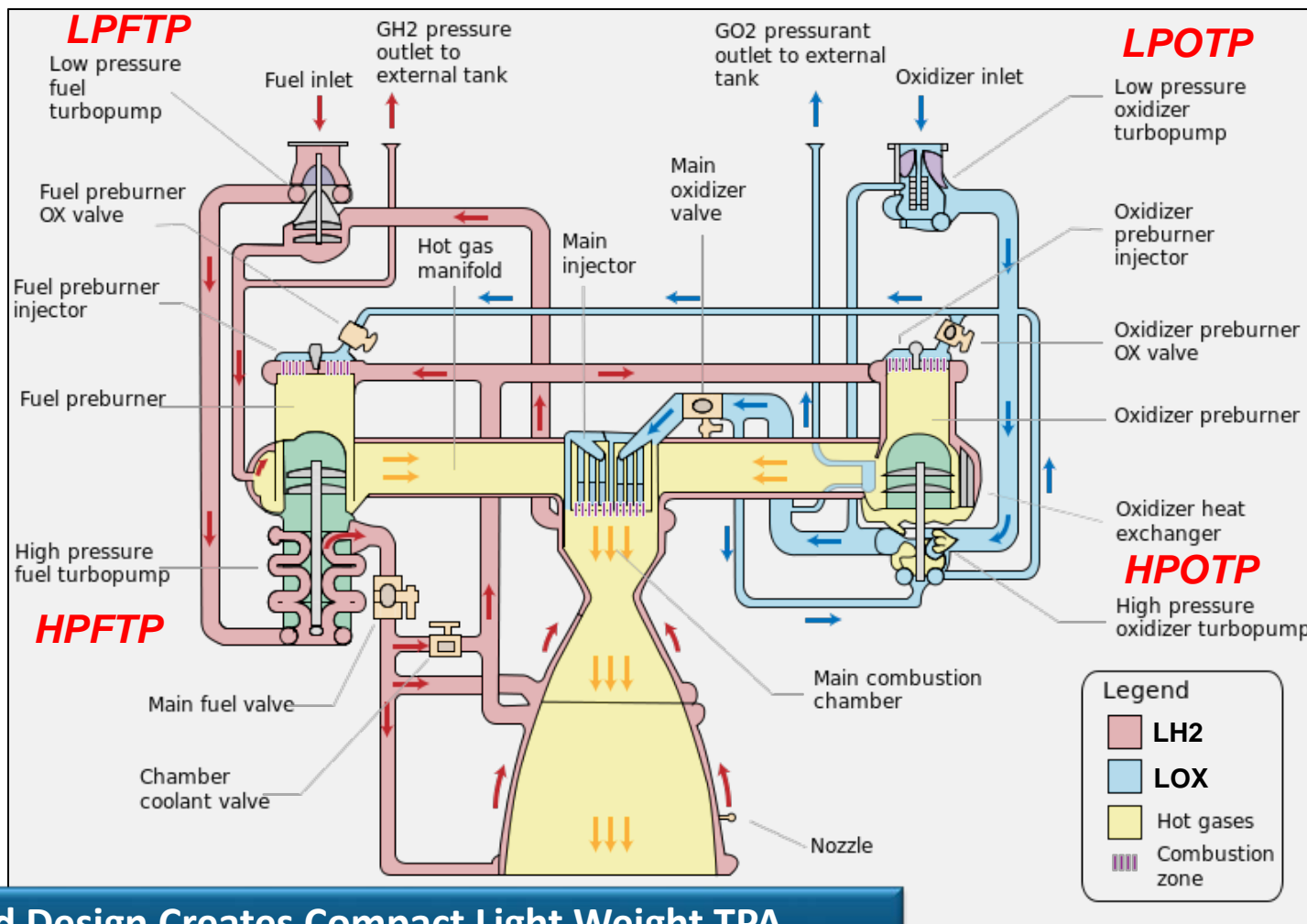


Current US LOX /Hydrogen Stage Combustion Engine Technology



• 1980's Space Shuttle Main Engine

- Separate low speed fuel & oxidizer inducer / pumps
- *Excellent cavitation performance*
- Separate high speed main pumps
- *Speed increase pump & turbine efficiency and reduced size*
- LOX & LH₂ used as lubricants
- Freezing problem eliminated with LOX cooled bearings



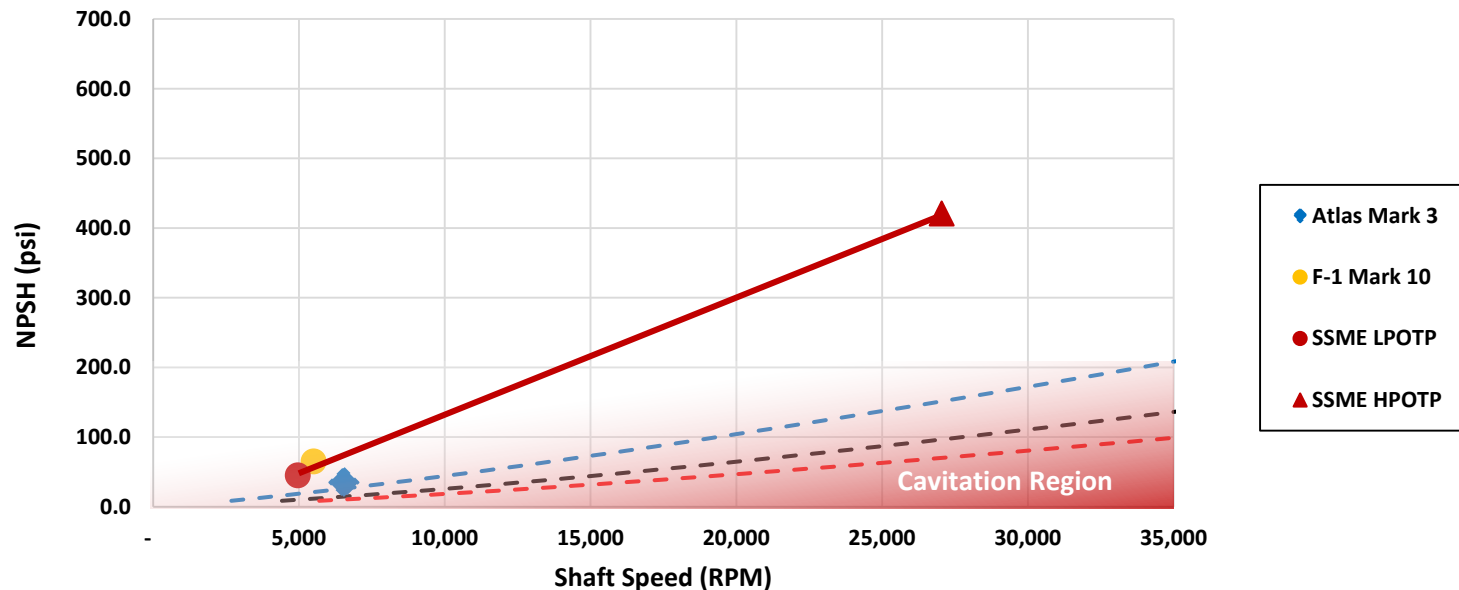
Multi – Speed Design Creates Compact Light Weight TPA



Overcoming Cavitation Limits



- Cavitation performance and shaft speed limits overcome by the use of a multi-speed turbopump designs



- The SSME solved this problem by separating the turbopump into two separate units

Multi-Shaft Speed Overcomes Cavitation Limit by Dividing the Turbopump



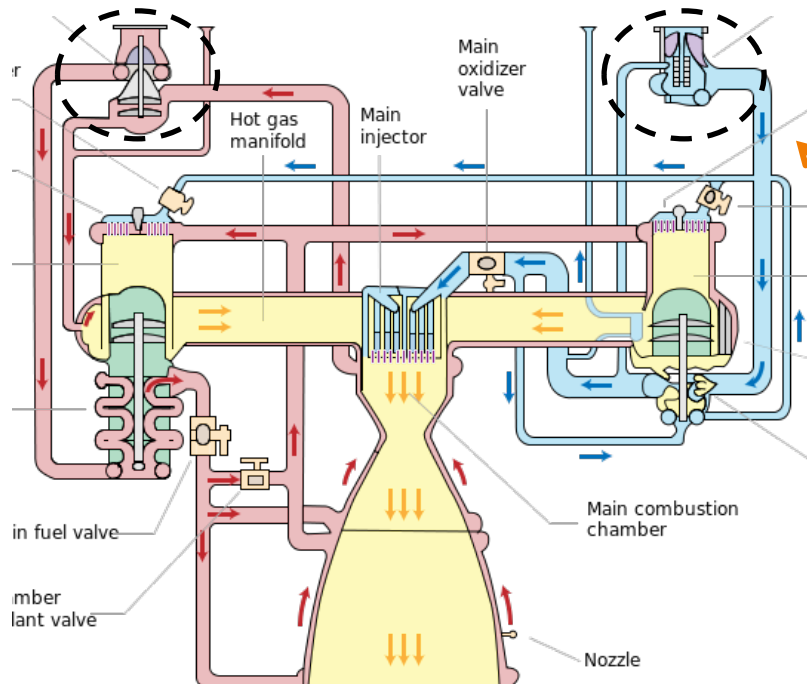
Beyond Space Shuttle Main Engine



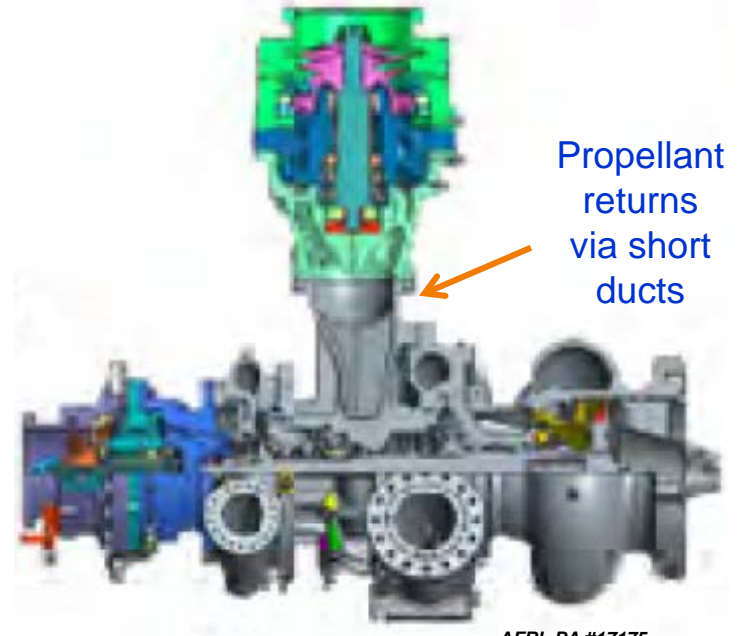
- **Further refinement of design**

- **Closely coupling the boost pumps to the high speed turbopump**
- **Single shaft high speed turbopump**

SSME's Low Speed Pumps Separated via Long Ducts



HydroCarbon Boost Low Speed Pumps Closely Coupled



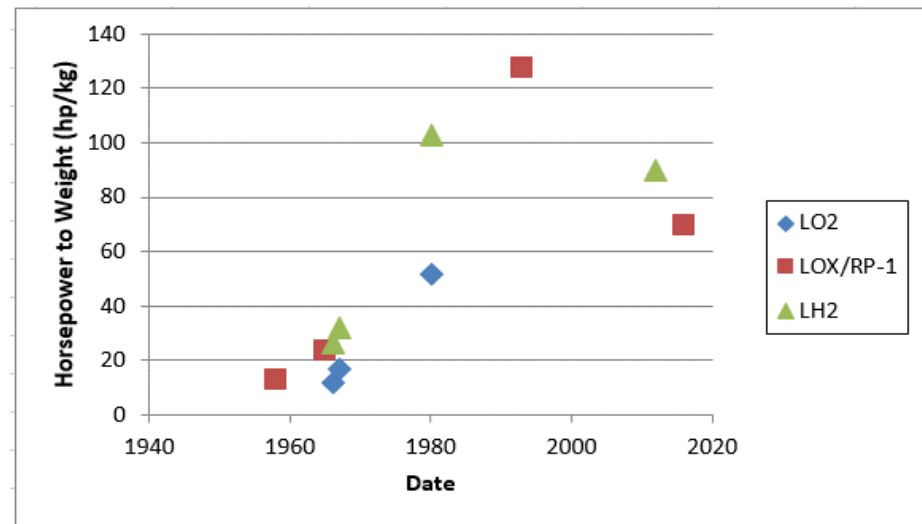
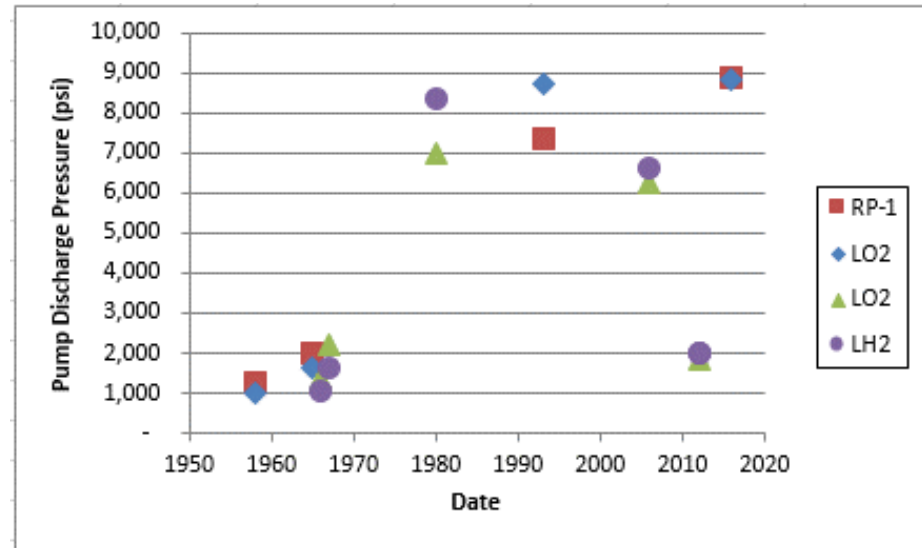
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Historical Trends



- Initially only low pump discharge & horsepower to weight turbopumps were possible
- Today a wide range of turbopumps are able to be designed
 - Mission dependent:
 - Low performance & cost for modest deltaV missions
 - High performance for large deltaV missions





Summary



- **Significant advances in rocket turbopump technology have been made over the past fifty years**
 - Eliminated the need for separate lubrication systems
 - Multi-shaft designs have increased efficiency and decreased turbopump weight without sacrificing cavitation margin
 - Close coupled boost pumps to high speed pump
- **Together increased pump discharge and horsepower to weight almost an order of magnitude**

Resulting in launch vehicles with greater utility and performance



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