

2016

# Volcanic Lightning in Eruptions of Sakurajima Volcano

Harald E. Edens

*New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology*

Ronald J. Thomas

*New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology*

Sonja A. Behnke

*Los Alamos National Laboratory*

Stephen R. McNutt

*University of South Florida, smcnutt@usf.edu*

Cassandra M. Smith

*University of South Florida, cmsmith10@mail.usf.edu*

*See next page for additional authors*

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## Scholar Commons Citation

Edens, Harald E.; Thomas, Ronald J.; Behnke, Sonja A.; McNutt, Stephen R.; Smith, Cassandra M.; Farrell, Alexandra; Van Eaton, Alexa R.; Cimarelli, Corrado; Cigala, Valeria; Eack, Ken; Aulich, Graydon; Michael, Christopher; Miki, Daisuke; and Iguchi, Masato, "Volcanic Lightning in Eruptions of Sakurajima Volcano" (2016). *School of Geosciences Faculty and Staff Publications*. 1633.  
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**Authors**

Harald E. Edens, Ronald J. Thomas, Sonja A. Behnke, Stephen R. McNutt, Cassandra M. Smith, Alexandra Farrell, Alexa R. Van Eaton, Corrado Cimarelli, Valeria Cigala, Ken Eack, Graydon Aulich, Christopher Michael, Daisuke Miki, and Masato Iguchi



## **Volcanic Lightning in Eruptions of Sakurajima Volcano**

Harald Edens (1), Ronald Thomas (1), Sonja Behnke (2), Stephen McNutt (3), Cassandra Smith (3), Alexandra Farrell (3), Alexa Van Eaton (4), Corrado Cimarelli (5), Valeria Cigala (5), Ken Eack (1), Graydon Aulich (1), Christopher Michel (6), Daisuke Miki (7), and Masato Iguchi (8)

(1) New Mexico Tech, Socorro, NM, USA (edens@nmt.edu), (2) Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, NM, USA, (3) University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, USA, (4) USGS Cascades Volcano Observatory, Vancouver, WA, USA, (5) Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich, Munich, Germany, (6) CM Arborecare, Los Alamos, NM, USA, (7) Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan, (8) Sakurajima Volcanic Observatory, Kagoshima, Japan

In May 2015 a field program was undertaken to study volcanic lightning at the Sakurajima volcano in southern Japan. One of the main goals of the study was to gain a better understanding of small electrical discharges in volcanic eruptions, expanding on our earlier studies of volcanic lightning at Augustine and Redoubt volcanoes in Alaska, USA, and Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland.

In typical volcanic eruptions, electrical activity occurs at the onset of an eruption as a near-continual production of VHF emissions at or near to the volcanic vent. These emissions can occur at rates of up to tens of thousands of emissions per second, and are referred to as continuous RF. As the ash cloud expands, small-scale lightning flashes of several hundred meters length begin to occur while the continuous RF ceases. Later on during the eruption larger-scale lightning flashes may occur within the ash cloud that are reminiscent of regular atmospheric lightning. Whereas volcanic lightning flashes are readily observed and reasonably well understood, the nature and morphology of the events producing continuous RF are unknown.

During the 2015 field program we deployed a comprehensive set of instrumentation, including a 10-station 3-D Lightning Mapping Array (LMA) that operated in 10  $\mu$ s high time resolution mode, slow and fast  $\Delta E$  antennas, a VHF flat-plate antenna operating in the 20-80 MHz band, log-RF waveforms within the 60-66 MHz band, an infra-red video camera, a high-sensitivity Watec video camera, two high-speed video cameras, and still cameras.

We give an overview of the Sakurajima field program and present preliminary results using correlated LMA, waveforms, photographs and video recordings of volcanic lightning at Sakurajima volcano.