

Expedition 12 Settle Into Their New Home

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Expedition 12 Commander Bill McArthur and Flight Engineer Valery Tokarev are spending their first few days alone on the station following last Monday's safe return of their predecessors.

McArthur and Tokarev, veterans of shorter space shuttle flights, began familiarizing themselves with the nuances of a longer on orbit life.

While becoming acquainted with their new microgravity home and laboratory, they did some routine maintenance, exercised and conducted experiments. They reviewed emergency evacuation procedures, swapped a battery in the Zarya module and rearranged stowage items in the Unity connecting node.

During their six month mission, they expect to perform at least two spacewalks; the first in early November.

They will move their Soyuz spacecraft from the Russian Pirs docking port, so it can be used for the spacewalks. In December, the crew expects to oversee the arrival of a new supply ship, the 20th Progress vehicle. This week McArthur set up a camera for a session of the Earth Knowledge Acquired by Middle School Students experiment.

Using the Web, students can control a special digital camera mounted on the station to photograph coastlines, mountain ranges and other geographic areas of interest. Thousands of students from 119 schools around the world are participating in the 20th session of this NASA education program.

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