

ISS Crew to Take a Day Off Thursday

November 23 2005



International Space Station Commander Bill McArthur and Flight Engineer Valery Tokarev will enjoy a day off Thursday to celebrate Thanksgiving. The holiday highlights a week of robotics operations, routine maintenance and early preparations for a Christmas-time shipment of supplies.

McArthur and Tokarev make up the 12th crew on the space laboratory and the sixth to observe Thanksgiving on the orbiting complex. They sent holiday greetings to Earth this week and described their plans to feast on irradiated smoked turkey, dehydrated green beans, powdered drinks and a thermo-stabilized cranberry-apple dessert.

On Monday, McArthur powered up the station's 60-foot robotic arm, the Canadarm2, and maneuvered it for training and engineering tests. Working at a control panel inside the station's Destiny laboratory, he used the arm to grip and release a fixture on the exterior of the Lab. Following that, he positioned the Canadarm2 to allow its cameras to monitor the next planned spacewalk.

That spacewalk, using Russian spacesuits, was initially scheduled for December but was rescheduled for Feb. 2, 2006, to ease the crew's workload. Managers also cancelled a third spacewalk planned for the Expedition 12 crew. That spacewalk would have used U.S. spacesuits as did a first venture earlier this month. McArthur and Tokarev accomplished several get-ahead tasks during the Nov. 7 spacewalk, enabling managers to delete the final excursion.

Also Tuesday, McArthur and Tokarev performed routine medical checkups. Today, they completed a regular audit of food supplies to update inventory lists.

The crew's attention now turns to the departure of the Progress cargo spacecraft, which is docked to the station, Dec. 20. After the craft leaves the station, it will burn up in the atmosphere. The next Progress is scheduled to launch Dec. 21 and dock to the complex on Dec. 23. It will be the 20th Progress to go to the station. Its cargo is expected to include Christmas gifts from the crew's families.

Source: NASA

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