

ISS Crew to Celebrate New Year

December 30 2005



The crew onboard the International Space Station are looking forward to celebrating New Year's Day after spending a quiet Christmas 225 miles above the Earth.

On Sunday, Expedition 12 Commander Bill McArthur and Flight Engineer Valery Tokarev spoke with their families, friends and co-workers. They also feasted on a meal including Russian soup, bread and fish.

They opened gifts, including a Russian Santa Claus matryoshka doll, and chocolates. The gifts arrived last Friday in a recent cargo shipment. The crew took Monday off in observance of Christmas and will take next Monday off for New Year's. They plan to ring in 2006 with another Russian meal.

This week, the crew unloaded almost three tons of equipment and supplies from the Progress. The crew also logged their food intake and collected urine samples as part of a medical study to understand ways to prevent kidney stones in weightlessness.

There were no problems with station operations. The Elektron oxygen generation system was intentionally shut down to deplete the oxygen in the Progress supply ship that arrived in September. The crew had several special audio/visual linkups in observance of the holidays. They had a news conference with Russian media and a conversation with Grandfather Frost, Russia's version of Santa Claus who delivers presents to children on New Year's.

The Expedition 12 crew is halfway through a six-month mission.

Source: NASA

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