

Discovery Reaches the Vehicle Assembly Building

May 12 2006



Workers accompany the orbiter Discovery as it moves away from NASA's Orbiter Processing Facility toward the Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB) atop an orbiter transporter. Image credit: NASA/KSC

A wave of excitement rippled across NASA's Kennedy Space Center on May 12 as the orbiter Discovery rolled out of its processing facility and into the nearby Vehicle Assembly Building.

Inside, the shuttle's external tank and twin solid rocket boosters stand ready for the orbiter, which will soon be attached to the rest of the assembly. Space Shuttle Discovery is set to launch on the STS-121 mission, currently targeted for launch no earlier than July 1.

The flight will continue the evaluation of flight safety procedures, including shuttle inspection and repair techniques. It also will deliver more supplies and cargo for future station expansion.

Steve Lindsey will command the mission, flying with pilot Mark Kelly, spacewalkers Mike Fossum and Piers Sellers and mission specialists Stephanie Wilson and Lisa Nowak. European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Reiter is also part of the crew and will remain on the station for several months. Reiter's arrival will give the station its first three-person crew since May 4, 2003.

Source: NASA

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