

Two Canadian astronauts to return to space

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Two veteran Canadian astronauts were named in Quebec Monday for separate space missions next year, the Canadian Space Agency announced.

At a news conference at its St. Hubert, Quebec, headquarters, Industry Minister Jim Prentice said Julie Payette, the second Canadian to fly in space would work as a mission specialist aboard the shuttle Endeavor in April.

In a separate mission, Robert Thirsk would become the first Canadian to take on a long stint living aboard the International Space Station in May for between four and six months, the Ottawa Citizen reported. The station has been inhabited continuously by rotating shifts of astronauts from various countries since 2000.

Thirsk was one of the first six astronauts Canada selected when it entered the space program, and eight Canadians have flown on NASA space shuttles on 11 missions since 1984, the agency said.

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