

NASA assigns STS-127, Expedition 19 crews

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The U.S. space agency has assigned the crews for the STS-127 space shuttle mission and the Expedition 19 International Space Station mission.

The Endeavour space shuttle's STS-127 mission is to deliver the final components of the Japanese space agency's Kibo laboratory to the space station. Expedition 19 will double the size of the station's resident crew to six people.

Mark Polansky will command Endeavour for STS-127, targeted to launch in 2009. Marine Lt. Col. Douglas Hurley will serve as pilot, with astronauts Christopher Cassidy, Thomas Marshburn, David Wolf and Julie Payette, a Canadian Space Agency astronaut, onboard.

The mission will deliver U.S. Army Col. Timothy Kopra to the station to join Expedition 18 as a flight engineer and science officer and return Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata to Earth. Hurley, Cassidy, Marshburn and Kopra will be making their first trips into space.

The Japanese module will provide a type of "front porch" for experiments in the exposed space environment. The mission is to include five spacewalks.

Expedition 19 will be commanded by cosmonaut and Russian Air Force Col. Gennady Padalka.

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