

Astronauts await word of baby girl on Earth

November 20 2009, By MARCIA DUNN , AP Aerospace Writer



In this Nov. 18, 2009 photo released by NASA, the International Space Station and Space Shuttle Atlantis' payload bay are seen as Atlantis and the station approach each other during rendezvous and docking activities on flight day three. A pair of spacewalking astronauts, one of them a surgeon, hustled through antenna and cable work Thursday outside the International Space Station. (AP Photo/NASA)

(AP) -- Atlantis' astronauts anxiously awaited word on the birth of one crewman's daughter Friday, as they moved more supplies into the International Space Station and geared up for another spacewalk.

Astronaut Randolph Bresnik was about to become a father for the second time. His wife, Rebecca, was due to give birth Friday back home in Houston. They already have a son who is 3 1/2.

Bresnik, 42, a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, was keeping close tabs on everything and hoped to be in contact by phone for the big event.

Shuttle pilot Barry "Butch" Wilmore said Bresnik was focused on the mission and holding up pretty well.

"He's excited about that. So are we," Wilmore said in a broadcast interview. "It's a great thing to share with him in this environment. He certainly wishes timing could have been better. He'd certainly like to be there for the birth of his daughter ... but timing is what timing is."

Another NASA astronaut - Mike Fincke - was on the space station when his second child, also a girl, was born in 2004.

As for celebrating, Wilmore said no cigars will be passed around - "maybe some chewing gum." Smoking is prohibited aboard [NASA spacecraft](#) for obvious safety reasons.

Mrs. Bresnik, like her husband, works at Johnson Space Center. She is the lead attorney for international law there. The astronaut said before rocketing into orbit Monday that if he had to miss the birth, "this is a pretty good excuse and hopefully she'll forgive me for it later on."

The 12 space travelers got some extra moving time Friday. That's because Atlantis was declared free of any worrisome launch damage Thursday, with no further inspections needed until after the shuttle's departure.

The two crews also spent the day gearing up for the second spacewalk of their mission. Bresnik and Michael Foreman will venture out Saturday to work on the space station.

Atlantis - which delivered tons of spare parts and equipment - will remain at the space station until the day before Thanksgiving. The holiday will be filled with landing preparations.

Shuttle commander Charles Hobaugh said he doesn't have anything "scripted" for Thanksgiving dinner and will make do with whatever is left in the pantry. "I guarantee you we're going to have a fabulous time, one way or another," he said.

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