

Astronaut twins reunited after 5 months apart

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In this Thursday, March 17, 2010 picture, Expedition 26 Commander Scott Kelly, left, is reunited with his twin brother, Mark Kelly following a flight back to Ellington Field in Houston from Kustanai, Kazakhstan. Scott Kelly landed in Kazakhstan on March 16 with his Russian crewmates in the Soyuz TMA-01M spacecraft after 159 days in space, 157 days on the International Space Station. Mark Kelly is in the final weeks of training as Commander of the final flight of Endeavour, STS-134, that will spend more than a week docked to the ISS. Endeavour is targeted for launch on April 19, 2011. (AP Photo/NASA, Rob Navias)

(AP) -- Astronaut Scott Kelly is back home reunited with his twin astronaut brother, after a five-month space station mission that was marred by the shooting of his congresswoman sister-in-law.

Kelly hurried back to Houston on Thursday, just a day after landing in

Kazakhstan aboard a Russian capsule. He was immediately reunited with identical twin Mark, who's married to Rep. [Gabrielle Giffords](#).

Giffords is recuperating in Houston from a gunshot wound to the head. She was shot Jan. 8 while meeting with constituents in Tucson, Ariz. The tragedy occurred three months into Scott Kelly's stay at the [International Space Station](#).

Scott Kelly, who served as station commander, said he called his brother as much as he could from orbit, but satellite coverage for phone calls was sporadic. That's why he couldn't wait to be reunited.

"Just seeing him and talking to him and seeing how he's doing," he said in a [NASA](#) interview conducted within hours of his touchdown with two Russian crewmates.

Mark Kelly is the commander of NASA's next shuttle flight. Endeavour is due to blast off for the final time April 19.

Scott Kelly said the shooting, "without a doubt," was the low point of his 159-day mission. "Shocking, very sad, tragic," he said.

"It certainly was difficult," Scott Kelly said about being stuck in space when the shooting occurred.

But as military pilots, he noted, they are trained to put personal issues aside and focus on their job.

"So although I would have preferred to be able to help him in person and assist as best I could, I recognize that my place was on the space station," he said.

The high of his mission: overseeing all the visiting spacecraft, especially

shuttle Discovery's recently completed visit. Discovery - making its final voyage before retirement - returned from the station last week.

Kelly returned to Earth wearing a turquoise wristband for his sister-in-law that had been delivered by Discovery's crew. The wristband has a peace sign, a heart and her nickname Gabby.

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