

Giffords' husband hopes she'll be at April launch

March 24 2011, By MARCIA DUNN , AP Aerospace Writer



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) -- The astronaut husband of wounded Rep. Gabrielle Giffords said Thursday there's a "pretty good chance" she will attend his space shuttle launch next month.

"We still don't know for sure. I'm just awaiting final approval from her

doctors," shuttle commander Mark Kelly told reporters at a news conference at NASA's Johnson Space Center.

Kelly said his wife, who is recovering from a gunshot wound to the head, is doing "remarkably well."

"She's improving every day - and in the realm of brain injuries that is very significant and pretty rare," he said. "She's starting to walk, talk more - more every day."

Giffords is also beginning to deal with the shooting at a Tucson, Ariz., shopping center in January, he said. "Despite that, she remains in a very good mood," he said.

Kelly spoke at the traditional preflight news conference for shuttle crews. Wearing a turquoise "Gabby" wristband, he spoke first, reading from a statement before the crew took questions. He said he wanted reporters to focus on the [shuttle mission](#), not his wife's recovery.

He is the commander of NASA's next-to-last shuttle flight. [Shuttle Endeavour](#) is due to blast off for the final time April 19. The fleet is retiring after [shuttle Atlantis](#) makes one last trip to the [International Space Station](#) this summer.

Kelly quit training after his wife was shot while meeting with constituents. But a month later he decided to fly the two-week mission. At the time, he said he wanted his wife to attend the launch.

"She's been looking forward to this for a long time," he said Thursday.

Within two weeks of the shooting, Giffords was transferred to TIRR Memorial Hermann hospital in Houston. Kelly said he sees her every morning before work and at the end of the day.

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