

First woman in space ready for 'one-way flight to Mars'

June 7 2013



Soviet astronaut Valentina Tereshkova speaks during a press conference in Star City outside Moscow, on June 7, 2013. Tereshkova—the first woman to go to space—says she is ready to score another coup and fly to Mars, even if it would be just a one-way trip.

Russia's Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman to go to space, said on Friday she was ready to score another coup and fly to Mars, even if it would be just a one-way trip.

"Mars is my favourite planet," the 76-year old told a news conference in Zvyozdny Gorodok (Star City) outside Moscow, home to a cosmonaut training centre.

Tereshkova, who became a national heroine at the tender age of 26 when she made a solo space flight in 1963, said she had been part of the group who studied the possibility of going to the Red Planet.

"But we know the human limits. And for us this remains a dream. Most likely the first flight will be one way. But I am ready," she said.

Under the call sign Chaika (Seagull), Tereshkova during her three-day mission circled the Earth 48 times, her flight becoming a major propaganda coup for the Soviet Union.

On June 16, Russia will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Tereshkova's historic flight.

In 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to go to space.

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