

Two astronauts will expand envelope with one-year spaceflight

December 18 2014, by Marcia Dunn



This photo combo provided by the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center via NASA, shows NASA astronaut Scott Kelly and Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko. Kelly and Kornienko will rocket into orbit from Kazakhstan in March, 2015. They will spend a year aboard the International Space Station. At a news conference Thursday, Dec. 18, 2014, at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, Kelly and Kornienko said they anticipate many scientific gains from their mission. (AP Photo/Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center via NASA)

The two men assigned to a one-year spaceflight said Thursday that their

upcoming mission will allow the world to push deeper into space.

NASA astronaut Scott Kelly and Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko will rocket into orbit from Kazakhstan in March and move into the International Space Station for an entire year. For NASA, it will represent a space endurance record; for Russia, it will fall two months shy of its world record.

At a news conference Thursday at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, Kelly and Kornienko said they anticipate many scientific gains from their mission. Researchers need to know more about the prolonged effects of space on humans, before astronauts embark on Mars expeditions lasting three years, round trip, they said.

"What makes this exciting for me, this one-year flight, is about the science and everything we're going to learn from expanding the envelope on the space station," Kelly said. "If we're ever going to go to Mars someday, the International Space Station is really a great platform to learn much more about having people live and work in space for longer durations. It's close to the Earth, and it's a great orbiting facility."

Kelly and Kornienko have been training for this mission since their selection two years ago. Both already have spent a half-year aboard the orbiting lab, on separate flights, and have been advised by previous yearlong space fliers to "pace yourself."

The 50-year-old Kelly, a former Navy fighter pilot, said his goals are the same as they are every time he flies in space: "No one gets hurt, we don't break anything and we leave as friends."

Kelly noted that his first spaceflight, back in 1999, lasted eight days. At the time, it "seemed like that was a long time." His second flight, also on a space shuttle, lasted 13 days, and his space station visit in 2010 lasted

159 days.

"They're getting longer," he told reporters. "I think if I fly again," it just goes on forever "and I never come home."

Kornienko, 54, a former Soviet paratrooper, said the support of his family has helped him deal with the preparations and the flight itself.

He had exciting personal news for those tuning in: "You can congratulate me. I am becoming grandpa."

More information: NASA:

www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/main/index.html

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