

Space capsule with 3 astronauts returns to Earth

December 14 2017



Matryoshka, Russian traditional wooden dolls, decorated with portraits of U.S. astronaut Randy Bresnik, left, Russian cosmonaut Sergey Ryazanskiy, center, and Italian astronaut Paolo Nespoli are displayed during a welcome ceremony at the airport of Karaganda, Kazakhstan, Thursday, Dec. 14, 2017. Three astronauts on Thursday landed back on Earth after nearly six months aboard the International Space Station. (AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky, Pool)

Three astronauts returned to Earth on Thursday after nearly six months aboard the International Space Station, landing on the snow-covered

stepped outside of a remote town in Kazakhstan.

A Russian Soyuz capsule with NASA's Randy Bresnik, Russia's Sergey Ryazanskiy and Paolo Nespoli of the European Space Agency descended under a red-and-white parachute and landed on schedule at 2:37 p.m. local time (0837 GMT; 3:37 a.m. EST).

The three were pulled out of the capsule within 20 minutes and appeared to be in good condition.

Bresnik, Ryazansky and Nespoli spent 139 days aboard the orbiting space laboratory. The trio who arrived at the station in July contributed to hundreds of scientific experiments and performed several spacewalks.

They left behind Alexander Misurkin, commander of the crew, and two Americans, Joe Acaba and Mark Vande Hei.

During their stay at the station, the crew had a phone call with Pope Francis who talked with them about Dante's verses and Antoine de Saint-Exupery's "The Little Prince."

Bresnik, a U.S. Marine who flew combat missions during the Iraq war, told the pope what strikes him is that in space there are "no borders, there is no conflict, it's just peaceful."

Kentucky-born Bresnik also celebrated Thanksgiving in space, feasting on pouches of turkey with his colleagues.

The space station will go back to a six-member crew when NASA's Scott Tingle, Russia's Anton Shkaplerov and Japan's Norishige Kanai take off from Kazakhstan on Sunday.



ESA (European Space Agency) astronaut Paolo Nespoli rests in a chair shortly after he and NASA astronaut Randy Bresnik, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Sergey Ryazanskiy landed in their Soyuz MS-05 spacecraft in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan on Thursday, Dec. 14, 2017. Bresnik, Nespoli and Ryazanskiy are returning after 139 days in space onboard the International Space Station. (Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP)



The Russian Soyuz MS-05 space capsule lands about 150 km (90 miles) south-east of the Kazakh town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, Thursday, Dec. 14, 2017. Three astronauts on Thursday landed back on Earth after nearly six months aboard the International Space Station. (AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky, Pool)



U.S. astronaut Randy Bresnik is helped out of the Soyuz MS-05 spacecraft just minutes after he, ESA (European Space Agency) astronaut Paolo Nespoli and Roscosmos cosmonaut Sergey Ryazanskiy, landed in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan on Thursday, Dec. 14, 2017. Bresnik, Nespoli and Ryazanskiy are returning after 139 days in space onboard the International Space Station. (Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP)



Italian astronaut Paolo Nespoli, center, is assisted by ESA space agency specialists pose for a photo at the airport of Karaganda, Kazakhstan, Thursday, Dec. 14, 2017. Three astronauts on Thursday landed back on Earth after nearly six months aboard the International Space Station. (AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky, Pool)



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