

Two pilots, rocket scientist, oceanographer flying SpaceX

April 23 2021, by Marcia Dunn



In this Jan. 11, 2012 photo made available by NASA, Akihiko Hoshide of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency prepares for spacewalk training at the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory near the Johnson Space Center in Houston. Hoshide is a member of the crew for SpaceX's third astronaut launch to the International Space Station on Friday, April 23, 2021. (Robert Markowitz/NASA via AP)

SpaceX's third crew has an attack helicopter pilot, a former Air France pilot, a Japanese rocket scientist and an oceanographer.

The four veteran [astronauts](#) should reach the International Space Station on Saturday for a six-month stay, following Friday's liftoff from NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

A brief look at each:

— Shane Kimbrough, 53, the flight's commander, is a retired Army colonel who led a helicopter platoon during the 1991 Gulf War. His love of [space](#) came early: His grandparents lived near Florida's Kennedy Space Center. The son of an Army aviator who flew in Vietnam, Kimbrough grew up in Atlanta. He taught math at the U.S. Military Academy and jumped out of planes for the Army, before moving to Houston in 2000 to work with NASA's shuttle training aircraft. He became an astronaut in 2004, flying on the shuttle in 2008 and launching eight years later in a Russian capsule to the [space station](#) he helped build. He and wife Robbie have three grown children.

— Megan McArthur, 49, the pilot, is flying in the same seat as husband Bob Behnken did during SpaceX's debut crew launch nearly a year ago. This time, he was the one with their 7-year-old son, Theo, waving goodbye. It's been 11 years since McArthur last rocketed into orbit, aboard a shuttle on NASA's final Hubble Space Telescope repair mission. She's eager to see the space station, after two decades as an astronaut. Born in Hawaii but raised all over in a Navy family, McArthur conducted graduate research in underwater acoustics at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, led diving expeditions and tested water equipment. She became an astronaut in 2000.



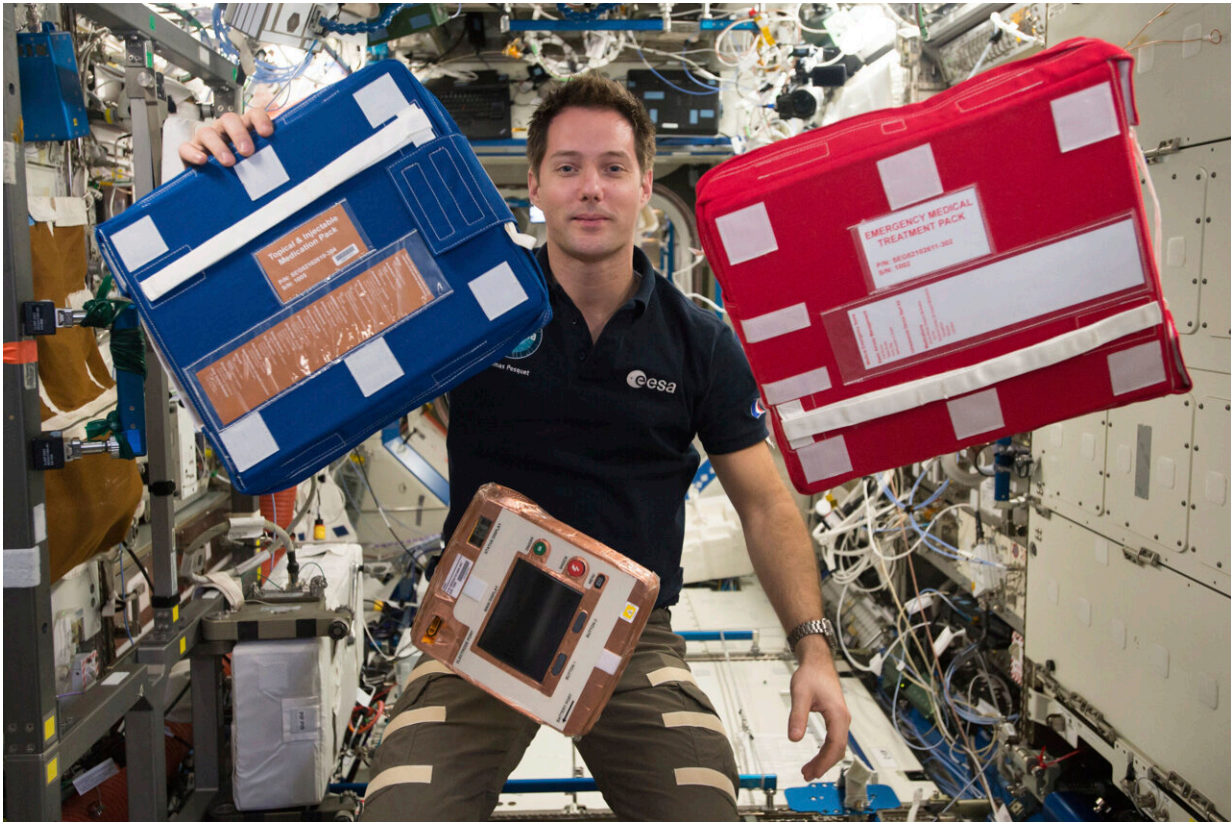
This March 3, 2021 photo made available by SpaceX shows mission specialist Thomas Pesquet of the European Space Agency, pilot Megan McArthur and commander Shane Kimbrough of NASA, and mission specialist Akihiko Hoshide of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, the crew for its third astronaut launch to the International Space Station, at the SpaceX training facility in Hawthorne, Calif. (SpaceX via AP)



The Crew Dragon space capsule astronauts, from front left, European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Pesquet, NASA astronaut Megan McArthur, NASA astronaut Shane Kimbrough and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Akihiko Hoshide leave the Operation and Checkout Building on their way to board the capsule for a mission to the International Space Station at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Friday, April 23, 2021. (AP Photo/John Raoux)



In this Tuesday, June 25, 2019 photo made available by NASA, astronaut Megan McArthur poses for a portrait at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. McArthur is a member of the crew for SpaceX's third astronaut launch to the International Space Station on Friday, April 23, 2021. (Joel Kowsky/NASA via AP)



This Dec. 25, 2016 photo made available by NASA shows flight engineer Thomas Pesquet of the European Space Agency aboard the International Space Station. Pesquet is a member of the crew for SpaceX's third astronaut launch to the International Space Station on Friday, April 23, 2021. (NASA via AP)



In this Tuesday, July 9, 2019 photo provided by NASA, astronaut Shane Kimbrough poses for a portrait at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. Kimbrough is a member of the crew for SpaceX's third astronaut launch to the International Space Station on Friday, April 23, 2021. (Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP)

— Thomas Pesquet, 43, was flying for Air France when the European Space Agency chose him as an astronaut 12 years ago. The son of schoolteachers, Pesquet found space "cool" while growing up in Normandy, and earned a degree in spacecraft design. He joined the French Space Agency as an engineer in 2002. Two years later, Air France tapped him for its flight training program. He logged 2,300 flight

hours on commercial airliners before becoming an astronaut in 2009. Pesquet launched on a Russian Soyuz rocket to the space station in 2016 for a six-month mission. His longtime partner, Anne Mottet, works for the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization.

— Akihiko Hoshide, 52, joined the Japanese Space Agency right out of college in 1992 as an engineer, working on the H-II rocket. He made the astronaut cut seven years later and helped develop Japan's Kibo lab for the space station. He installed Kibo, or Hope, in 2008, launching aboard shuttle Discovery. Hoshide returned to the station in 2012 for six months, flying from Kazakhstan. He'll join Japan's Soichi Noguchi at the [station](#), before Noguchi departs next week on his own SpaceX ride. "It will be really nice to see him—and we have the luxury of hugging in orbit, not like the situation on the ground" because of the pandemic, Hoshide said. He's married with an 11-year-old son.

© 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Two pilots, rocket scientist, oceanographer flying SpaceX (2021, April 23) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-04-rocket-scientist-oceanographer-spacex.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--