

Station, Shuttle Mission Crew Announced

16 May 2005

NASA and its international partners have named new crew members for upcoming missions to the International Space Station (ISS).

U.S. astronaut William S. McArthur, Jr. and Russian Cosmonaut Valery I. Tokarev will serve on the International Space Station as the crew of Expedition 12. They will travel to the ISS on board a Russian Soyuz spacecraft later this year for their six-month mission. McArthur is the Expedition 12 commander and Tokarev is the flight engineer.

Thomas Reiter, a European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut, will also carry out a long-duration mission on the Station. He will fly to the Station aboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis on mission STS-121, planned for a September 2005, launch. Reiter will work on the Station as part of an agreement between the Russian Federal Space Agency and ESA.

Reiter's arrival on the Station marks the return to a three-person crew. Station crews were reduced to two members in May 2003, to conserve onboard resources until the Shuttle, with its considerable cargo capability, could again deliver supplies.

McArthur, Tokarev and Reiter are space flight veterans. McArthur and Tokarev trained as backup crew members for ISS Expeditions 8 and 10. McArthur has flown on three Space Shuttle flights: STS-58 in 1993; STS-74 in 1995; and STS-92 in 2000. He has logged more than 35 days in space, including more than 13 hours spacewalking. On his last two missions he visited the Russian Space Station Mir and the ISS.

Tokarev flew on Shuttle mission STS-96 in 1998. It was a 10-day mission to deliver four tons of supplies to the ISS in preparation for its first inhabitants. He has logged 235 hours in space.

Reiter joined ESA's astronaut corps in 1992. He is a veteran of a 179-day ESA-Russian mission aboard Mir from September 1995 through February 1996. He has been training for a long-term flight aboard the ISS.

Reiter joins the crew of STS-121: Commander Steve Lindsey, Pilot Mark Kelly and Mission Specialists Piers J. Sellers, Mike Fossum, Lisa Nowak, and Stephanie Wilson. Reiter will return to Earth aboard STS-116 or a Russian Soyuz after his stay aboard the Station.

STS-121 is the second scheduled test flight for the Shuttle since the Columbia accident in Feb. 2003, and the first to transport a crew for a long-duration Station mission since 2002. Atlantis will carry supplies and equipment to the ISS, test upgraded Shuttle safety equipment and procedures.

Source: NASA

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