

NASA Announces New International Space Station Crew

October 18 2006

NASA and the Russian Federal Space Agency have named two astronauts and two cosmonauts to the next International Space Station crew, known as Expedition 15. Astronauts Clayton C. Anderson and Daniel M. Tani will travel to the station next year and work as flight engineers. Cosmonauts Fyodor N. Yurchikhin and Dr. Oleg V. Kotov will spend six months aboard the orbiting laboratory.

Anderson will get a ride to the station aboard Space Shuttle Endeavour's STS-118 mission, targeted for launch in June 2007. He will return to Earth on shuttle Atlantis on mission STS-120. That flight will carry his replacement, Tani, to the station. Tani will return on shuttle mission STS-122, targeted for October 2007.

Yurchikhin will command Expedition 15, and Kotov will serve as station flight engineer and Soyuz commander. Yurchikhin and Kotov will fly to the complex aboard a Soyuz spacecraft scheduled to launch in March 2007. Until Anderson arrives, astronaut Sunita L. Williams will serve as Expedition 15's third crew member and flight engineer. She will fly to the station on STS-116 in December.

A native of Nebraska, Anderson was selected as an astronaut in 1998 following a technical career in mission operations at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Houston. He managed the Emergency Operations Center at Johnson for several years before becoming an astronaut. He has a bachelor's degree from Hastings College in Hastings, Neb., and a master's from Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.

A native of Illinois, Tani has a bachelor's and a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. He was selected as an astronaut in 1996. Tani's first spaceflight was aboard Endeavour in December 2001 on the STS-108 mission. During that flight, he performed a four-hour spacewalk.

Yurchikhin previously visited the space station aboard Atlantis on STS-112 in 2002. He is qualified as a mechanical engineer and has a doctorate in economics. Before he was selected as a cosmonaut, Yurchikhin served as a Russian flight controller and lead engineer for several missions.

Kotov was selected as a cosmonaut in 1996 and has trained for Soyuz, Mir and space station missions. He is a graduate of the Kirov Medical Academy in Russia.

The Expedition 15 backup crew is astronaut Gregory E. Chamitoff for Anderson; Sandra H. Magnus for Tani; Russian cosmonauts Roman Y. Romanenko and Mikhail B. Kornienko for Yurchikhin and Kotov.

Source: NASA

Citation: NASA Announces New International Space Station Crew (2006, October 18) retrieved 19 September 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-10-nasa-international-space-station-crew.html>

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