

ISS crews honor Yuri Gagarin

12 April 2007

The International Space Station crews sent their best wishes to Moscow Thursday in honor of the anniversary of the pioneering space journey of Yuri Gagarin.

On April 12, 1961, the Russian cosmonaut became the first human launched into space. His 108-minute mission made him a world-wide hero. Gagarin died in 1968 at the age of 34 in a crash during a jet training flight.

Also, on the same date in 1981, the first U.S. Space Transport System -- to become known as the Columbia space shuttle -- was launched from Cape Canaveral, Fla., with astronauts Robert Crippen and John Young aboard.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration said that initial Columbia launch, STS-1, marked the only time a new spacecraft has been launched with a crew aboard on its first flight.

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