

# Expedition 7: Big success for smaller crew

By Melissa Davis

From a 40th birthday celebration that had people all over the globe wearing Hawaiian shirts to the world's first marriage in space, the Expedition 7 mission had many memorable moments highlighted at the crew's welcome home event Nov. 24 at the Gilruth Center at Johnson Space Center.

Through it all, however, it was never forgotten that Commander Yuri Malenchenko and Flight Engineer Ed Lu turned adversity into accomplishment as they kept a human presence in space following the Space Shuttle *Columbia* accident on Feb. 1, 2003.

The International Space Station Program Office and the International Partners determined that the Space Station would be occupied by only two crewmembers until the resumption of Shuttle flights because of limitations on consumables.

Space Station Manager Bill Gerstenmaier said the Expedition 7 crew was a "phenomenal team to keep Space Station flying."

While the event was one filled with smiles and laughter as the memories of Lu's birthday and Malenchenko's wedding were recounted, the bravery of the two men was not forgotten.

It was noted that Lu and Malenchenko were the first Space Station residents in history to ever launch and return in a Soyuz. In addition, this was also the first two-person crew to live there. They spent 186 days and nights on the Space Station without receiving visitors between the time they said goodbye to the Expedition 6 crew in May and when they welcomed the Expedition 8 crew in October.

Though they were alone on the Space Station for most of the 76 million miles they traveled, Lu said they never felt alone. "You were flying with us," he told the audience.

JSC Center Director Lt. Gen. Jefferson D. Howell, Jr., told Malenchenko and Lu that they were always in the hearts of those back on Earth who "supported you, rooted for you and prayed for you. We're just so happy to see you, and we're proud of you."



## PREFLIGHT

Pictured above, Cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko (left), Expedition 7 Commander, and Astronaut Ed Lu, NASA International Space Station Science Officer and Flight Engineer, take time out from practicing launch procedures in a Soyuz capsule simulator as part of their training at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City, Russia.

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Lu and Malenchenko use the virtual reality lab at the Johnson Space Center to train for their duties on the Space Station. They were assisted by United Space Alliance trainer Heidi Jennings.

jsc2002e2757 Photo by David DeHoyos



## MISSION

Mission Control (above) celebrates Lu's 40th birthday Hawaiian style.

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Lu and Malenchenko (above right) make their mark in history as the first two-person crew to live aboard the Space Station.

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Lu squeezes a bubble out of a tube in the Zvezda Service Module on the Space Station.

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