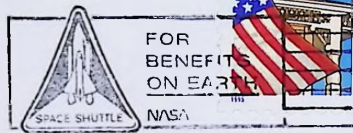
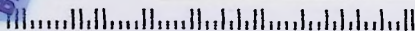


SPACE SHUTTLE
STS-79/ATLANTIS



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SPACE SHUTTLE (STS-79/ATLANTIS)

STS-79 will mark the fourth docking between the U.S. Space Shuttle and Russian Space Station Mir. The nine day flight will be highlighted by the return of American astronaut Shannon Lucid to Earth after an extended stay on Mir of more than 180 days. Veteran astronaut John Blaha will take Lucid's place aboard Mir, continuing a U.S. astronaut presence in space that will last for nearly two years. At least two additional U.S. astronauts will follow Lucid and Blaha to Mir for lengthy stays. Located in the payload bay of the orbiter Atlantis are the Orbiter Docking System (ODS) and the SPACEHAB-5 module. The ODS serves as the docking interface to Mir and also affords a passageway through which the crew can pass to and from the station. It is connected to the SPACEHAB-5, a pressurized mini-laboratory that allows astronauts to work in a comfortable shirtsleeve environment.

THE STS-79 CREW – Heading the veteran flight crew is William F. Readdy making his third trip into space. Readdy recently served as operations director for NASA activities at Star City in Russia, where U.S. astronauts train for their stays on Mir. Terrence W. Wilcutt will take the pilot's seat on the right side of the orbiter flight deck. This will be Wilcutt's second trip into space. Four mission specialists (MS) are assigned to STS-79. MS1 is Jay Apt, embarking on his fourth spaceflight. Also flying in space for the fourth time is MS2 Thomas D. Akers. The MS2 astronaut also serves as flight engineer, supporting the commander and pilot. Carl E. Walz is MS3 and John E. Blaha is MS4. Walz has flown in space twice before, while Blaha will be flying on the Shuttle for the fifth time. On his earlier flights, Blaha served as either mission commander or pilot; he assumes the MS position for the transfer to Mir. Blaha began training at Star City in January 1995. He will return to Earth during STS-81 in December 1996, and Mission Specialist Jerry Linenger will succeed him on Mir.

THE STS-79 CREW INSIGNIA – The STS-79 patch is the shape of the Space Shuttle's airlock hatch, symbolizing the gateway to international cooperation in space. The emblem illustrates the historic cooperation between the United States and Russia in space with the flags of both nations as a backdrop. The handshake of EVA-suited crew members of Russia and the United States symbolizes mission teamwork, not only of the astronaut crew but also the teamwork between both countries space personnel in science, engineering, medicine and logistics. The names of Lucid and Blaha either up or down denotes transport up to the Mir station or return to Earth on STS-79.