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NPS Graduates Headed for International Space Station

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NPS Graduates Headed for International Space Station

Local expert available for interviews

Naval Postgraduate School alumnus Daniel Bursch will become the school's first resident of the International Space Station this week.

The space shuttle Endeavour is scheduled to launch Bursch, a Navy captain and former test pilot who earned a master's degree at NPS in 1991, and fellow NPS alumnus, Lt. Cmdr. Mark Kelly, (NPS '94), Thursday afternoon. Details on the mission and countdown to launch are available at HYPERLINK "<http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/shuttle/index.html>"
<http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/shuttle/index.html>.

The space flight will be the fourth for Bursch, who was selected for the astronaut program before he had finished his degree work at NPS. Prof. Rudy Panholzer, Bursch's thesis advisor at the time and now dean of the Graduate School of Engineering and Applied Science, said, "I helped him with his application package to NASA and wrote a strong recommendation. When Dan was selected, he hadn't quite finished his degree. We went to great lengths to make sure he could finish his course from Houston. This was before the days of distance learning!"

Panholzer will be available to meet with reporters or conduct phone interviews on Thursday. Contact John Sanders, NPS media relations officer, at 656-3346 or Rob Bourke, NPS alumni director, at 656-2089 to arrange interviews.

Kelly, an aeronautical engineering graduate, test pilot and Desert Storm combat veteran, will be making his first space flight. STS-108 is the nation's 11th shuttle mission to the International Space Station and the eighth ISS shuttle mission involving NPS graduates.

There are 19 NPS alumni currently serving as astronauts; 34 have been selected since the inception of America's manned space program.

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