

NASA Astronaut Peggy Whitson Returns from the International Space Station with Record-Breaking Accomplishments, September 4, 2017

President Trump Welcome Home Record-breaking NASA Astronaut Peggy Whitson

NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson and Jack Fischer received a special welcome as they were flying home to Houston Sunday evening. President Donald Trump spoke by phone with Whitson and Fischer on a NASA plane following Whitson's record-breaking mission to the International Space Station.

Whitson, Fischer, and Commander Fyodor Yurchikhin of Roscosmos, landed back on Earth Saturday in Kazakhstan. She and Fischer flew to NASA Johnson Space Center's Ellington Field Sunday.

"I want to congratulate Peggy and Jack for their incredible accomplishments. They make us all very proud," said President Trump. "Exploration has always been at the core of who we are as Americans, and their brave contributions to human spaceflight have continued that great tradition."

Whitson's records are:

- She is the U.S astronaut who has the most cumulative time in space with a total of 665 days during three long-duration missions.
- She is the only female astronaut to command the station twice. During her second mission, she became the first woman to command the space station. During this mission, she became the first woman to command the space station twice-- she was station commander from April 9 through June 1.
- She is the female astronaut who has spent the longest time in orbit during a single spaceflight — 288 days.
- She holds multiple spacewalking records: completing the most total spacewalks — 10; and most total spacewalking time — 60 hours, 21 minutes-- for a women; and having the third most spacewalking time for any spacefarer (a cosmonaut is first and former Astronaut Michael Lopez-Alegria is second)

"Peggy is an inspiration to us all," said President Trump, "especially to young women interested in or currently pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering and math."

This was the president's second call with the two astronauts. On April 24, when Whitson officially set the U.S. record for most cumulative days in space, Whitson and Fischer received a celebratory phone call from President Trump, First Daughter Ivanka Trump, and fellow astronaut Kate Rubins from the Oval Office.

"I appreciate President Trump reaching out personally to congratulate Peggy for her record breaking mission and Jack for his accomplishments on his first spaceflight," said acting Administrator Robert Lightfoot. "The president has had the opportunity to hear from Peggy and Jack first-hand how the work

abroad the International Space Station is directly pushing the boundaries of human knowledge, and advancing American leadership in the boundless frontier of space. I want to add my thanks to the teams on the ground across the globe, especially Houston, who are dealing with the aftermath of a Harvey, yet still maintained the focus to get Peggy and Jack home safely. It is an amazing team.”