

# Living beyond the space frontier

**Sergei Krikalev – Postal Documentation of Six Spaceflights (1988–2005)**  
From Soviet Mir to the International Space Station

## 1. Subject and Scope

This collection deals with the crewed spaceflights of Sergei Krikalev during the period 1988–2005.

The focus is on:

- Original, postally used covers
- Official launch and landing cancellations
- Baikonur and mission-related postmarks
- Postal items related to stays aboard Mir and the International Space Station

The collection is limited to postal-history-relevant material connected to Krikalev's six spaceflights.

## 2. Purpose of the Collection

The purpose is to present the postal and historical documentation of Krikalev's six spaceflights, highlighting the transition from the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation and the development of international cooperation (including the Shuttle–Mir and ISS programs).

## 3. Plan of the Collection

1. First Mir Mission – **Soyuz TM-7**
2. The Last Soviet Mission and Political Transition – **Soyuz TM-12**
  - Long-duration stay aboard Mir
  - Political transition (USSR → Russian Federation)
  - Landing under a new state structure
3. First Russian Cosmonaut on an American Shuttle – **STS-60**
4. First ISS Assembly Mission – **STS-88**
5. Expedition 1 – First Permanent ISS Crew – **Soyuz TM-31**
  - Beginning of continuous human presence in space
6. Expedition 11 – Commandership – **Soyuz TMA-6**
  - Commandership of the ISS

## 4. Sources and Research

The collection is based on:

- Official mission data
- Postal archives and launch cancellations
- Verified signatures
- Catalogue and exhibition literature

## 5. Significance of the Collection

Sergei Krikalev is among the most experienced spacefarers in history and symbolizes:

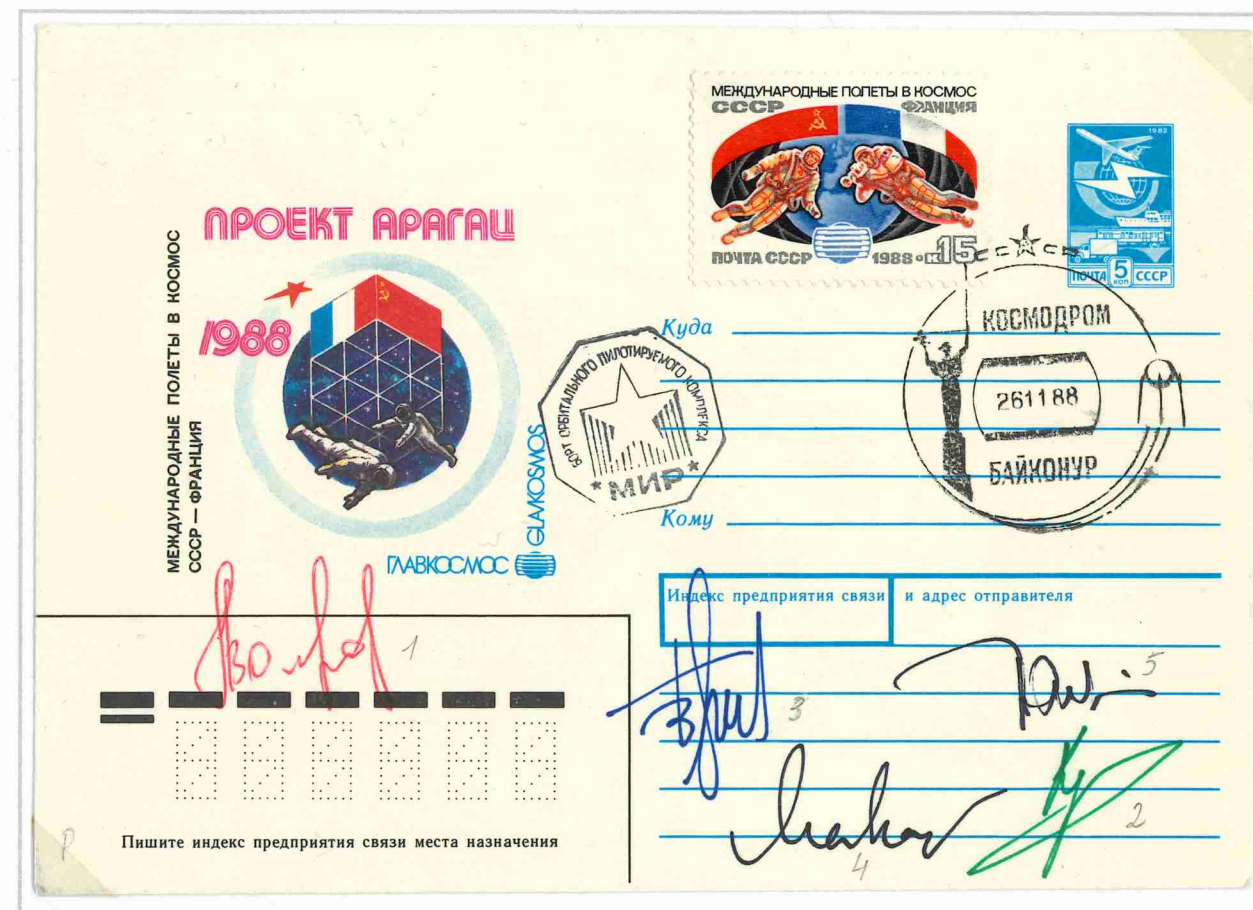
- The transition from Soviet to Russian spaceflight
- The first structural cooperation between Russia and the United States
- The early phase of the International Space Station

This collection illustrates the postal reflection of these historic developments.

Space flight data are displayed in regular font and *philatelic info in italic font*.

The best flown covers are marked with a blue frame

**Soyuz TM-7** launch on 26-11-1988 carried the second joined mission USSR-France. The original launch date off 21-11-1988 was moved back to permit French President Francois Mitterrand to attend the launch. Mir-4 crew Aleksandr Volkov and Sergei Krikalyov were delivered to Mir together with French Aragatz cosmonaut Jean-Loup Chretien.



Flown cover with Baikonur postmark 261188 Launch off the Soyuz TM-7. Additional octagonal seal of MIR

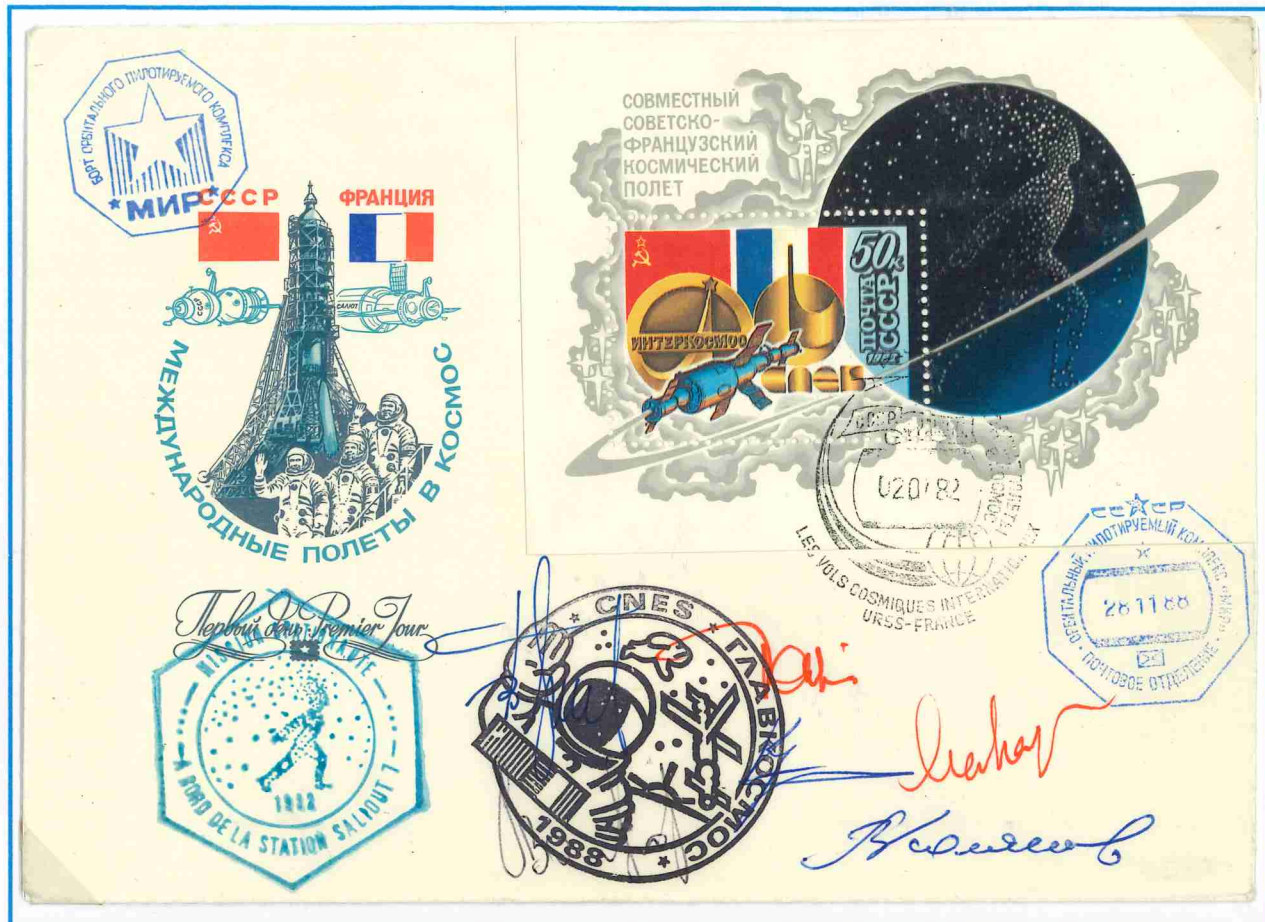
The spacecraft arrived at the Mir station at 28-11-1988 Titov, Manarov and Chretien returned to Earth in Soyuz TM-6. Alexander Volkov, Sergei Krikalyov and Valeri Polyakov remained aboard Mir.

Flown cover cancelled with MIR postmark date 28 11 88, docking TM-7 and 27 04 89, undocking TM-7. Cover also cancelled with MIR onboard handstamp. The "CNES-GLAVKOSMOS" round souvenir seal pictures the emblem of the mission.



Soyuz TM-Krikalyov and Volkov stayed behind with Valeri Polyakov and were to be replaced by the Soyuz TM-8 crew in April. On April 12, it was announced that Mir would be mothballed. Volkov, Krikalyov and Polyakov returned without being relieved by a new crew. They left the station unmaned and landed on April 27, 1989.

Soyuz TM-12 launched on 19-05-1991 aboard Anatoli Artsebarski, Sergei Krikalyov (on his second visit to the station), and British cosmonaut-researcher Helen Sharman, who was aboard as part of Project Juno, a cooperative venture partly sponsored by British private enterprise.



Soyuz T-6 onboard cover with postal cancel date 020782, landing Soyuz T-6 and with French cachet in cyan blue.

Cover taken by Chrétien onboard Soyuz TM-7 to MIR. Cancelled with MIR postmark date 281188, docking TM-7 and MIR onboard handstamp + French souvenir seal.

Cover with the Baikonur cancel, date 18 05 91 launch of the Soyuz TM-12, Special cancel devoted to the "USSR-Great Britain" flight, used on Baikonur and Zvezdny Gorodok with the lift-off date.



Flown cover cancelled with the Soviet board postmark date 27 04 89, undocking Soyuz TM-7 and 13 02 90, docking of Soyuz TM-9. During this period the cover remained on board of Mir.



Cover from international philatelic exhibition "TO THE STARS '91" date 07 04 1991 dedicated 30 years of Yuri Gagarin flight.

Month later this cover was taken on board of Soyuz TM-12 by Sergei Krikalev. Cancelled on the front with the MIR onboard handstamps.

Following a two-day solo flight Soyuz TM-12 docked with the Soyuz TM-11 Kvant1-Mir-Kristall-Kvant2 complex on 20-05-1991.

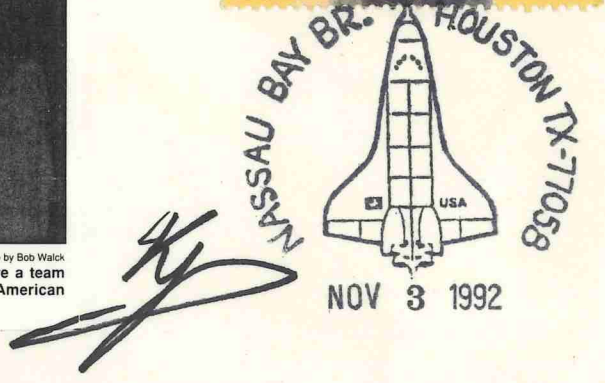


**STS-60** was the first mission of the US/Russian Shuttle-Mir Program, which carried Sergei K. Krikalev, the first Russian cosmonaut to fly aboard a Space Shuttle. The mission used Space Shuttle *Discovery*, which lifted off from Launch Pad 39A on 03-02-1994 from Kennedy Space Center, Florida. The mission carried the Wake Shield Facility experiment and a SPACEHAB module into orbit and carried out a live bi-directional audio and downlink link-up with the cosmonauts aboard the Russian space station *Mir*.

**Cosmonauts begin training at JSC**

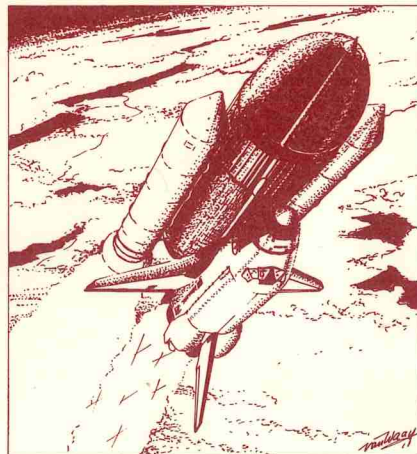


Russian cosmonauts Sergei Krikalev, left, and Vladimir Titov, right, share a team handshake with STS-60 Pilot Ken Reightler. The cosmonauts met the American press Tuesday in Bldg. 9.

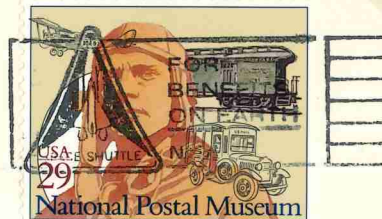


Cover with hand cancel Nassau Bay BR, Houston TX-77058, date nov 3 1992, first press conference with the Russian cosmonaut Sergei Krikatev. On the cover 2 stamps issued on May 29, 1992, for the Russian and American space accomplishments 29c Cosmonaut and the US Shuttle and a 29c astronaut and the Russian space station MIR.

Machine cancel Kennedy Space Center date feb 3 AM 1994, launch STS-60.



Launch STS - 60



During the eight-day flight, the crew of *Discovery* conducted a wide variety of materials science experiments. Krikalev conducted significant portions of the Remote Manipulator System (RMS) operations during the flight. STS-60 landed at Kennedy Space Center, Florida on 11-02-1994

**STS-88** launched on 04-12-1998 was a significant milestone in NASA's Space Shuttle program. It marked the first Space Shuttle mission dedicated to assembling the International Space Station (ISS). The primary payload was the U.S.-built ISS module called *Unity*.



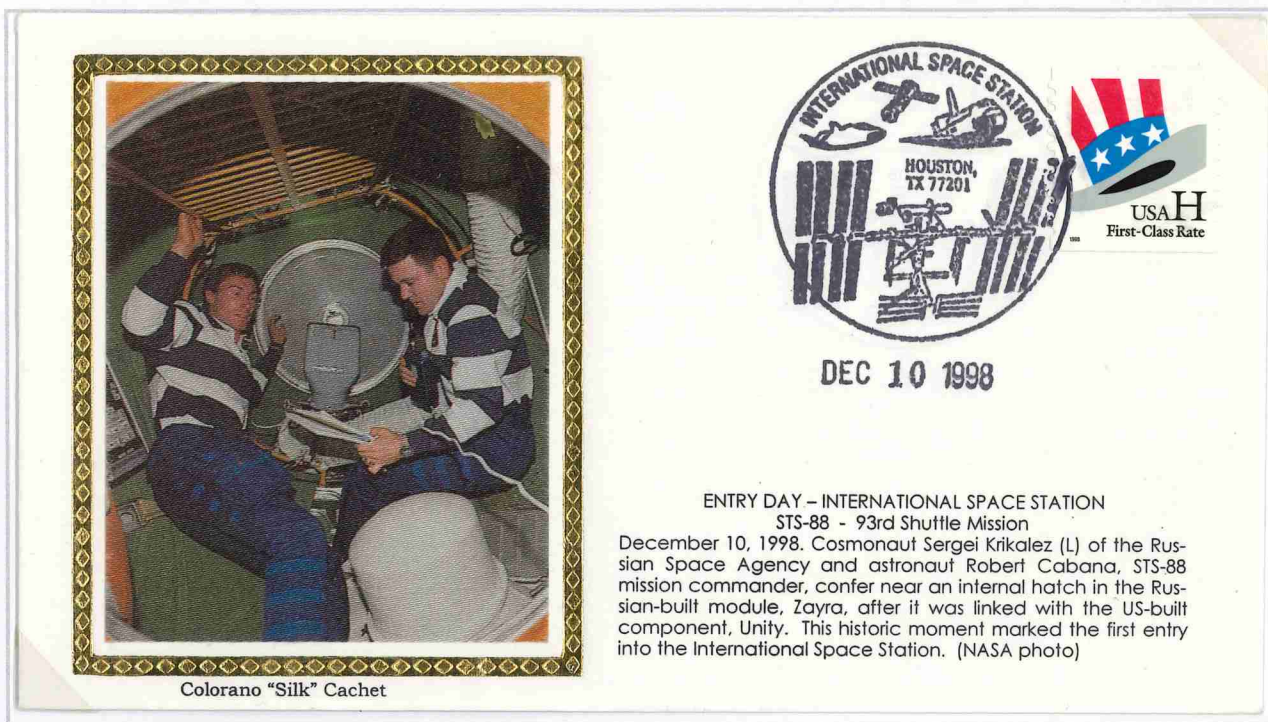
Cover docking *Unity* module with *Zarya*  
 Baykonur federal postmark letter B date 07129812, + Rocket postmark date 07129813 and additional postmark "international flights" date 07121998 docking *Unity* with *Zarya*

On 6-12-1998, Bob Cabana fired *Endeavour's* rockets several times to manoeuvre the shuttle within *Canadarm's* reach of the *Zarya* FGB. Currie grappled *Zarya* and Cabana fired *Endeavour's* downward jets to bring the two modules together.



Hand cancel Korolev date 07129810, docking module *Unity* with *Zarya* and signed by the crew.

11-12-1998 was a historic day as the International Space Station was opened for the first time on orbit. Commander Bob Cabana and Russian Cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev opened the hatch to the Unity Node of the new International Space Station.



ENTRY DAY – INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION  
 STS-88 - 93rd Shuttle Mission  
 December 10, 1998. Cosmonaut Sergei Krikalez (L) of the Russian Space Agency and astronaut Robert Cabana, STS-88 mission commander, confer near an internal hatch in the Russian-built module, Zarya, after it was linked with the US-built component, Unity. This historic moment marked the first entry into the International Space Station. (NASA photo)

Colorano "Silk" Cachet

Hand cancel Houston TX 77201 with date DEC 10 1998, first entry in ISS.  
 From this Shuttle flight onward, a specific illustrated postmark will be used by Houston for all missions to the ISS.

Hand cancel Kennedy Space Center date DEC 15 1998, landing STS-88



On 14-12-1998, Space Shuttle Endeavour undocked from the International Space Station. Pilot Rick Sturckow backed Endeavour 450 feet (140 m) away from the station and started a nose-forward fly-around of the station, so that the crew could take pictures of the space station.  
 15-12-1998 was landing day for Space Shuttle Endeavour and its crew of six. Endeavour and crew landed on the Kennedy Space Center's Runway 15.

Krikalev was member of the Expedition 1 crew.

Soyuz TM-31 launched on 31-10-2000 and carried a crew of three to dock it with the Zvezda module of the International Space Station (ISS) on 2-11-2000.

The crew of two Russian and one American cosmonauts will spend over three months in the ISS, and return to Earth in an American shuttle (STS 102) in February 2001



Cover with Baikonur Field Post Russia 08814, letter C, date 31102000 Launch Soyuz TM-31.

Privately crafted special postmark "Gagarin Launch" in blue ink used by 08814 unit post-office.

Rubber cachet in red ink "Expedition 1"

Москва А-581  
 а/л 502  
 Темплов К.И.

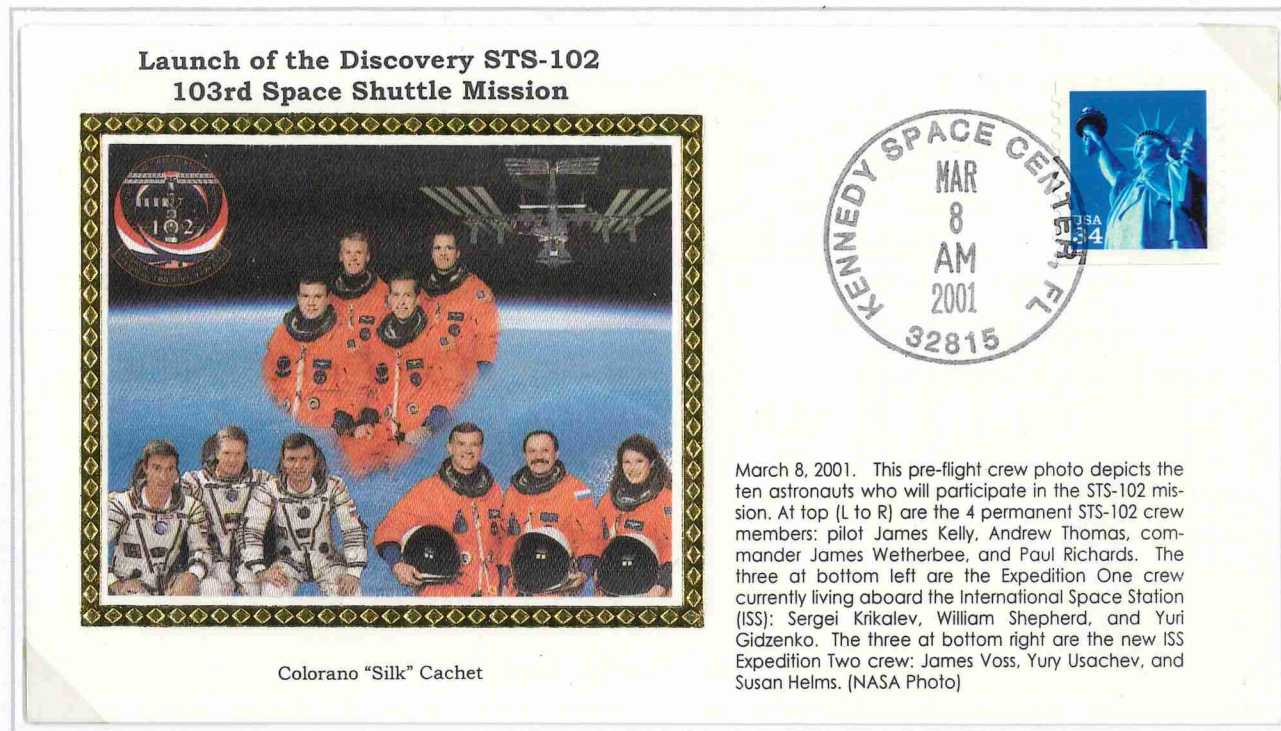
The crew is the first batch of a decade-long "permanent habitation" of the ISS.



Cover with Korolev Post cancel date 02110012 docking Soyuz TM-31 with ISS. Rubber cachet in blue ink, expedition 1.

Москва А-581  
 а/л 502  
 Темплов К.И.

**STS-102** was a Space Shuttle mission to the International Space Station (ISS) flown by Space Shuttle *Discovery* and launched 8-03-2001 from Kennedy Space Center, Florida. Its primary objectives were resupplying the ISS and rotating the Expedition 1 and Expedition 2 crews



March 8, 2001. This pre-flight crew photo depicts the ten astronauts who will participate in the STS-102 mission. At top (L to R) are the 4 permanent STS-102 crew members: pilot James Kelly, Andrew Thomas, commander James Wetherbee, and Paul Richards. The three at bottom left are the Expedition One crew currently living aboard the International Space Station (ISS): Sergei Krikalev, William Shepherd, and Yuri Gidzenko. The three at bottom right are the new ISS Expedition Two crew: James Voss, Yuri Usachev, and Susan Helms. (NASA Photo)

Hand cancel Kennedy Space Center date MAR 8 AM 2001, launch STS-102.

**Soyuz TMA-6** begins Expedition 11 by carrying 3 astronauts to the International Space Station. Russian Commander, cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev alongside Flight Engineers, John Phillips (NASA) & Roberto Vittori (ESA) will launch aboard the Soyuz spacecraft from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on 14-04-2005.



Launch cover Soyuz TMA-6.

Baikonur International flight short date cancel date 15040506, launch Soyuz TMA-6 + Baikonur postmark towards the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cosmodrome with special inscription "Soyuz" date 15 04 05 and additional general postmark "Letter X"

Discovery docked with the station on 10-03-2001. The crew transfer, the first for the station, was among the mission's top priorities

Expedition One Commander William Shepherd, Soyuz Commander Yuri Gidzenko and Flight engineer Sergei Krikalyov were replaced by Expedition Two Commander Yuri Usachyov and Expedition Two Flight Engineers Susan Helms and James Voss.

New residents is docking at the International Space Station on 17-04-2005 to begin a six-month mission and to prepare for the arrival of the first Space Shuttle crew to visit the complex since November 2002..



Cover with Korolev Post cancel date 10030110, docking STS-102 with ISS.



Cover Launched June 6, 1985, aboard Soyuz T-13 to Salyut-7 station Stamped aboard station by Pentagonal blue ink stamp "Board of Space Station Salyut-7"

Soyuz T-15 crew carried cover from Salyut-7 to MIR station on March 15, 1986. Cancel with MIR onboard cancel. Cover returned to Earth on July 16, 1986, aboard Soyuz T-15

Next time covers flown with Soyuz TMA-4 ISS-9 commander cosmonaut Gennady Padalka. Cover cancelled with main ISS handstamp "Board of International Space Station"

April 15, 2005, cover flown in space again with Soyuz TMA-6/ISS-11 commander Sergei Krikalev. Stamped with round stamp of 11th Expedition

Interesting fact about this cover is that it is the first cover flown on MIR station with first cosmonauts on board MIR and same time it is the last cover flown on Salyut-7 station and Soyuz T family ship (Soyuz T-15).

Only 2 covers existing.

DEAR FRIEND,

The ISS project is bringing more than 16 nations through space exploration. Once the construction is complete, the global partners will continue testing for new materials, conducting scientific research in micro-gravity and expanding exploration in hopes of improving human life and answering the unknown. And I am proud to be a part of it.

After my first space mission STS-89, the Eight Shuttle-MIR docking in 1998 I am serving again as a member of Russia-USA team. And on behalf of our International team I would like to express thanks for your interest to our ISS-10 expedition flight.

With Best Regards,

*Salizhan Sharipov*

Salizhan Sharipov,

Soyuz TMA-5 commander,

ISS-10 flight engineer

Pilot-Cosmonaut of Russia



**Борт Международной  
Космической Станции.  
Board of the International  
Space Station.  
Экспедиция 10  
Expedition 10**



Board of the International Space Station.

**Космическая Почта. Доставлено на борту Союз ТМА-5. Space Mail. Delivered on board of Soyuz TMA-5**



10 x 15 cm old Soviet postcard flown to ISS aboard Soyuz TMA-6 and returned from ISS April 24, 2003, aboard Soyuz TMA-5. Cancelled with round ISS board cancel date 17 АПР 2005 (Docking TMA-6) and 24 АПР 2005 (Undocking TMA-5) and on board ISS cancel.

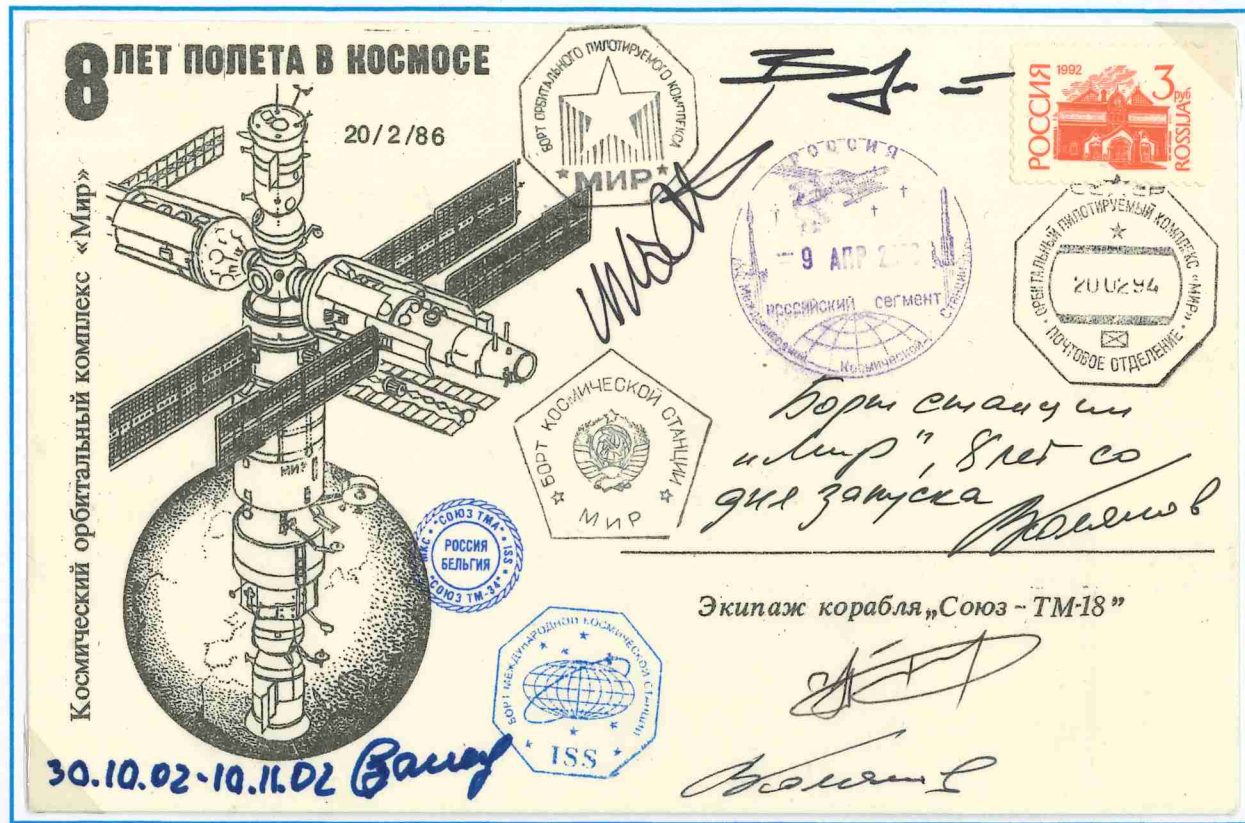
One of the 10 letters carried by Sharipov on board of Soyuz TMA-5. Cancelled with round ISS board cancel date 16 ОКТ 2004 (docking TMA-5) and 24 АПР 2005 (undocking TMA-5) + on board cancel. Letter cancelled with the personal emblem cancel from Cosmonaut Salizhan Sharipov; the Soyuz TMA-5 patch cancel; the ISS Expedition 10 cancel and the on board ISS cancel



Front postcard reduced 50 %



Expedition 11's Krikalev and Phillips will spend about six months aboard the Space Station. The crew, Commander Leroy Chiao and Cosmonaut Salizhan Sharipov, has been on the Station since October and undocking ISS on 24-04-2005



Cover flown on board of Soyuz TM-18 to MIR space station with Valeriy Polyakov and after 438 days returned with him from station on Soyuz TM-20. Cancelled with 3 on board MIR handstamps date 20 02 94 with text " 8 year after launch MIR ". October 30, 2002, flown with commander of Soyuz TMA-1 . Sergei Zalyotin hand notared cover with dates 30.10.02-10.11.02 and signed. Cancelled cover with on board International Space Station handstamps together with board stamp . Tirth flight onboard Soyuz TMA-7, launched on September 30, 2005. Valeriy Tokarev cancelled front and back of cover with the ISS date cancel date 9 АПР 2006 , undocking TMA-7 and signed the cover as well. Cover flown 638 days in space. Unique cover.



Flown RKK Energia letter with instructions with ISS date cancel date 3 ОКТ 2005 ( docking TMA-7 ) and 11 ОКТ 2005 ( undocking TMA-6 ) and the ISS board Cancel . Signed by Gregory Olsen and John Phillips. After landing also signed by Sergei Krikalev ( 26.10.05 )

Expedition 11's Krikalev and Phillips spent 179 days in orbit. The Soyuz TMA-6, carrying the 11th long-duration crew and space tourist Gregory Olsen, undocked from the ISS as planned on 11-10-2005. It successfully landed 58 kilometers north-east of town of Arkalyk in Kazakhstan.



Flown RKK Energia cover with ISS date cancel date 17 АПР 2005 ( docking TMA-6 ) and 24 АПР 2005 ( undocking crew 10 with TMA-5 ) and the ISS board Cancel . Cover signed by Sergei Krikalev and John Phillips ( ISS expedition 11 ) , Salizhan Sharipov and Leroy Chiao ( ISS expedition 10 ) and Roberto Vittori.



Cover with Baikonur Feld Post Russia 08814, letter C, date 11102005 landing Soyuz TMA-6.