

Chapter Six

STS-87

Kalpana was selected for the STS-87 (1) crew in November 1996 and assigned the crew positions of Mission Specialist 1 (MS-1) and backup Flight Engineer for ascent. She and the other first-time fliers were assigned responsibility for design of the mission patch. This eventually took the form of the profile of a space suit helmet containing various symbols and insignia pertaining to the mission objectives. I have Kalpana's initial design sketches of this patch.



STS-87 mission patch

Her crewmates included former US Air Force pilot Kevin R. Kregel on his first flight as Shuttle Commander (CDR), classmate Lieutenant Colonel Steve W. Lindsey as Pilot (PLT), classmate Takao Doi of the Japanese National Space Development Agency, Colonel Leonid K. Kadenyuk of the Ukrainian Space Agency, Leonid's backup, Yaroslav (Yarko) I. Pustovyi, and second-time flier US Navy Commander Winston E. Scott.

Kregel had made two previous shuttle flights as pilot. As commander of STS-87 he made desultory efforts to bind the crew into a cohesive unit but never really succeeded. Paradoxically, he was fond of making snide comments, particularly when he had an audience, which hobbled his team-building efforts.

1. STS-87: Space Transportation System mission number 87.