Astronauts Shane Kimbrough and Sandra Magnus, both STS-126 mission specialists, are pictured with fresh fruit floating freely on the middeck of Space Shuttle Endeavour during flight day three activities. *Photo Courtesy of Nasa*

Astronaut continued //

On Nov. 17 Kimbrough and Pettit used the Canadarm2 robotic arm to move the Multi-Purpose Logistics Module named Leonardo into position for installation on the Earth-facing port of the Space station's Harmony node.

Leonardo contained systems which were installed in the U.S. Destiny lab and Harmony node, such as: two water recovery systems racks for recycling urine into potable water, a second toilet system, new galley components, two new food warmers, a food refrigerator, an experiment freezer, a combustion science experiment rack, two separate sleeping quarters and a resistance exercise device.

The first Space walk to service the International Space Station took place on Nov. 18 with Kimbrough serving as the intra-vehicular officer guiding fellow crew members Stefanyshyn-Piper and Bowen during their excursion.

Kimbrough then got ready for his turn outside with crew member Stefanyshyn-Piper on the evening of Nov. 19 as he spent the night in the Quest airlock. The stay lessened the preparatory time before beginning his scheduled Space walk on the afternoon of Nov. 20, the 10th anniversary of the International Space Station.

It would be another four days before Kimbrough would venture out for his second Space walk, and the final one of STS-126 mission, with Bowen on Nov. 24. Total time for both of his Space walks amounted to almost 13 hours at 122 nautical miles above the Earth.

With an extra day added to the mission and the crew's work done both shuttle and International Space Station crews packed up the Multi-Purpose Logistics Module and placed it back aboard Endeavour for the trip back home on Nov. 26.

The shuttle and International Space Station crews then took time out for a Thanksgiving Day celebration high above the Earth prior to saying their goodbyes and undocking the next day.

Due to threatening weather in Florida, the Space Shuttle Endeavour landed at Edwards Air Force Base in California at 4:25 p.m. EST Nov. 30, ending the STS-126 mission to the International Space Station. The shuttle traveled over 6.6 million miles in Space on its 16-day journey.

With his first successful Space flight complete Kimbrough gave some advice to the youth of America by stating, "You're going to be the next generation of leaders in our country or in our world."

"It's all in your hands and that's a big responsibility. But if you folks challenge yourselves, with the technology out there, there's really no limit to what you can do."

Trial By Fire

DA Best Warrior 2008

TOP: USASMDC/ARSTRAT NCO of the year SSG Christopher Barber awaits written exam in Department of the Army's Best Warrior competition. Photo by Amy Perry, Fort Lee Public Affairs Bottom: USASMDC/ARSTRAT Soldier of the year SPC Michael Moore plots his points for the Land Navigation portion of the competition. Photo by T. Anthony Bell, Fort Lee Public Affairs

By Sharon L. Hartman

FORT LEE, Va. — U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command was well represented during the 2008 Department of the Army Best Warrior Competition. The event, in its seventh year, took place at Fort Lee, Va., from Sept. 29 – Oct. 3, and pitted the top Noncommissioned Officers and Soldiers from 12 commands against each other, in the quest for the titles of Department of the Army Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year. Representing USASMDC/ARSTRAT was SSG Christopher Barber as the command's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, and SPC Michael Moore as the command's Soldier of the Year.

At the end of the week long competition, SSG Michael N. Merino, a U.S. Army National Guardsman, was named the 2008 Department of the Army Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, and SPC David R. Obray from U.S. Army Reserve Command was dubbed the 2008 Department of the Army Soldier of the Year.

A Soldier competing in the "Best Warrior" competition participates in a night-fire exercise at Fort Lee, Va., Oct. 2. Twenty-four of the Army's finest warriors representing 12 commands from across the Army gathered at Fort Lee, Va., from Sept. 29 to Oct. 3 to compete in the competition which named the Army's Soldier and noncommissioned officer of the year. *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tom Steber/Photo Illustration provided by Michael Kahl*