“Here’s some of the stories trending This Week at NASA!”

During a Nov. 24 ceremony at the White House, former NASA mathematician and physicist Katherine Johnson was one of seventeen individuals to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Obama. It is the nation’s highest civilian honor – given for meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors. Johnson's work influenced NASA space programs – from Project Mercury through the space shuttle. Her calculations were used for some of NASA's most historic missions – including the 1961 flight of Alan Shepard, the first American in space; the 1962 flight during which John Glenn became the first American to orbit Earth; and the 1969 Apollo 11 mission to the moon.
Kjell Lindgren of NASA sent wishes for a safe and happy Thanksgiving to all on Earth. The pair also revealed a few of the items on their Thanksgiving Day menu. Kelly is almost nine months into his year-long mission, conducting psychological and biomedical research on the station. Lindgren is nearing the end of his five-month mission. He is scheduled to return to Earth on Dec. 11.

In Russia, preparations and activities continue for the launch to the space station of NASA’s Tim Kopra and his Expedition 46/47 crewmates Yuri Malenchenko of the Russian Federal Space Agency and ESA astronaut Tim Peake. The trio will launch to the station aboard a Soyuz spacecraft on Dec. 15 for a six-month stay.

The first 3-D printed part in space was made a year ago aboard the International Space Station. The part – a spare faceplate for the printer itself, was made from instructions uploaded by ground controllers on Nov. 24, 2014. Developing the ability to successfully
print 3-D parts in space could enable astronauts to make spare parts and tools when needed on long duration spaceflights, such as the journey to Mars.

Engineers at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center recently installed the first of 18 flight mirrors onto the James Webb Space Telescope. The installation of the 4-foot, hexagonal-shaped mirror is a critical milestone in construction of the observatory. All 18 primary mirrors will function as one large mirror to seek out and study distant galaxies, stellar systems and planets that might be able to support life. Installation of the mirrors is scheduled to be completed early next year.

NASA recently began its North Atlantic Aerosols and Marine Ecosystems Study, or NAAMES. The five-year study, which includes four seasonal research missions, will use sea vessels and aircraft to study the annual cycle of phytoplankton, and the impact that small airborne particles emitted from the ocean have on the climate-sensitive
North Atlantic. NASA's Langley Research Center, Goddard Space Flight Center and Wallops Flight Facility are supporting the mission.

Three NASA WB-57 High Altitude Research aircraft based near Johnson Space Center, recently took a historic formation flight in the skies over Houston. It was the first time the three WB-57s have been aloft at the same time since the early 1970s -- when the U.S. Air Force had an operational squadron of WB-57s. Since the early 60's, the aircraft have routinely been used for flights higher than 55,000 feet and as long as seven hours to conduct atmospheric and Earth science research, cosmic dust collection, rocket launch support, and other research.

And that’s what’s up this week @NASA … For more on these and other stories follow us on social media and visit www.nasa.gov/twan.