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Astronauts of Shenzhou XIII mission get medals of honor

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The three crew members of the Shenzhou XIII mission have been awarded with medals to honor their service and accomplishments.

The Communist Party of China Central Committee, the State Council and the Central Military Commission conferred on Tuesday the Second-grade Space Service Medal on Major General Zhai Zhigang and Senior Colonel Wang Yaping and a Third-grade Space Service Medal on Senior Colonel Ye Guangli.

Ye was also named a "Heroic Astronaut" on Tuesday. Zhai and Wang have received honorary titles for their past flight missions.

Zhai was commander of the six-month Shenzhou XIII mission while Wang and Ye were crew members. They are part of the People's Liberation Army Astronaut Division headquartered in northwestern Beijing.

Zhai and his crewmates have spent 183 days in orbit about 400 kilometers above the Earth since their Shenzhou XIII spacecraft was launched on Oct 16 from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center, making it China's longest-ever spaceflight.

They were the second inhabitants of the country's permanent space station named Tiangong, or Heavenly Palace.

Thanks to the Shenzhou XIII mission, Wang is now the record holder in China for the longest time in spaceflight, boasting a total of 198 days. She also became the first female Chinese spacewalker after taking part in the crew's first spacewalk on Nov 7.

During their space journey, the astronauts have carried out two spacewalks that totaled more than 12 hours. They've mounted components on the station's robotic arm and used it to practice extravehicular maneuvers. They've also examined the safety and performance of support devices for spacewalks and tested the functions of their extravehicular suits.

In addition, the trio had carried out two science lectures for Chinese students from the orbiting station.

A statement with regard to their medals called the astronauts outstanding representatives of Chinese science and technology professionals, space industry workers and PLA service members.

The CPC Central Committee urged the Chinese people to learn from their spirit and contributions to work harder for the Party and the country.