

MU69’s Hidden Side: Photography of the Team During the New Horizons Flyby

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Abstract

The New Horizons spacecraft flew past the planetesimal 2014 MU69 early on the morning of January 1, 2019. In the months leading up to the encounter, the science team, mission operations team, and hazard team prepared for the encounter from the JHU Applied Physics Laboratory. We were given unprecedented access to document the activities of the mission teams during the preparations to the encounter, the flyby itself, and the arrival of humanity’s first close-up images of a planetesimal. In the photos to be shared here, we show the activities and individuals of the team – in moods at times pensive, tense, ecstatic, overwhelmed, and overjoyed – during this historic flyby.

An online gallery of photos is at
<https://tinyurl.com/NewHorizonsPhotos>

1. Figures



Figure 1. The New Horizons ‘Hazard Team’ started in-person work two months before the encounter, to ensure the path ahead was free of orbital debris.



Figure 2. The Hazard Team is prepared to search for dust and debris under any conditions.



Figure 3. Casey Lisse, Heather Elliott, and Doug Hamilton take a quick trip outside of APL’s Building 200.



Figure 4. The first image showing MU69's bi-lobate structure hits the ground late in the evening of January 1, 2019.



Figure 5. Surface structure is resolved at finer detail on MU69.



Figure 6. Rajani Dhingra tests 2014 MU69 under high rotational-velocity conditions.



Figure 7. John Spencer and Tod Lauer in the minutes after the first image downlink.



Figure 8. The flyby has confirmed the shape, size, position, and albedo of MU69 derived from occultations led by Marc Buie.



Figure 9. Thank you from the team!

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