

Atlantis and Crew Back on Earth

September 21 2006



Space Shuttle Atlantis lands at Kennedy Space Center, Fla. Photo Credit: NASA TV

Space Shuttle Atlantis and the six STS-115 astronauts are back on Earth this morning after a 6:21 a.m. EDT landing at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

NASA officials and mission managers held a post-landing briefing at Kennedy Space Center in Florida following the successful landing of Space Shuttle Atlantis.

NASA Administrator Michael Griffin said, "The teams did a wonderful job." He added, "You've seen a great effort on NASA's part by a truly great team of people. We are rebuilding the type of momentum that

we've had in the past and we'll need to continue."

The orbiter landing convoy completed the process of "safing" the vehicle, and the six crew members took their first steps back on Earth as they exited Atlantis through the Crew Hatch Access Vehicle. After receiving a quick check by doctors, Commander Brent Jett was followed onto the runway by the entire crew. The astronauts performed a walk-around inspection of the vehicle to see how their ship fared through the 11-day mission.

Following the quick inspection of Atlantis, Jett offered nothing but praise for the dependable ship. "It was critical that she perform well and she did," said Jett. "It was a pleasure to fly her and it's great to be home."

The STS-115 astronauts then boarded the "Astrovan" waiting to take them to the crew quarters inside the Operations and Checkout Building, where they will be reunited with their families and undergo additional physical examinations.

Space Shuttle Atlantis glided to a landing this morning at Kennedy Space Center, Fla., concluding a successful mission to resume construction of the International Space Station. Touchdown occurred at 6:21 a.m. EDT at the Shuttle Landing Facility. It was the 21st night landing for a space shuttle and the 15th night landing at the Florida spaceport.

Atlantis launched Sept. 9 and arrived at the station on the 11th. The crew delivered the P3/P4 integrated truss segment to the station and conducted three successful spacewalks primarily devoted to preparing the truss and its solar arrays for operation. The 17.5-ton truss will provide power and data services for the station. The solar arrays, which were unfurled on Sept. 14, span 240 feet and will double the station's power generation capability once they become operational.

STS-115 was the 116th shuttle flight and the 19th mission to visit the space station. Atlantis has now flown 27 times and made six trips to the station.

Source: NASA

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