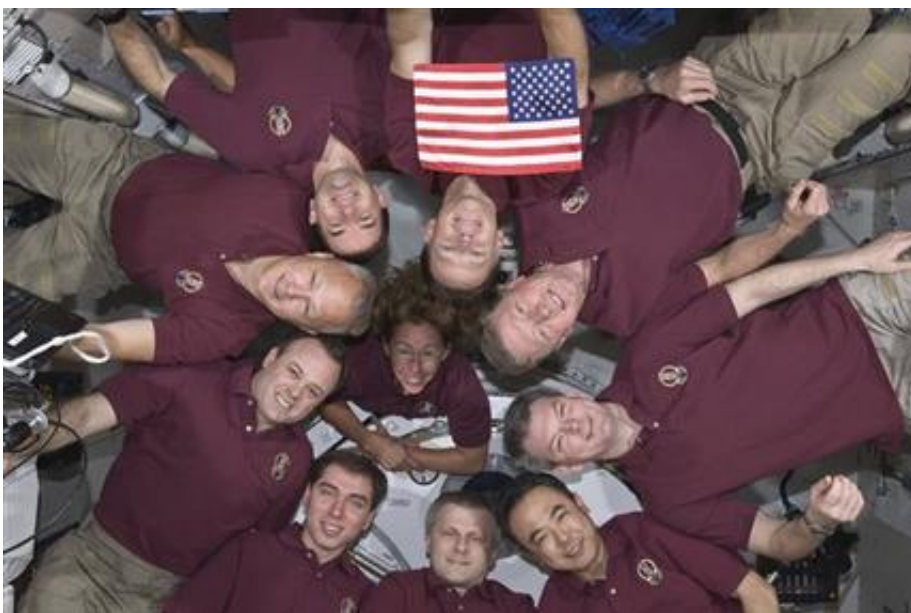


# Last space shuttle crew almost done packing up

July 17 2011, By MARCIA DUNN , AP Aerospace Writer

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In an occurrence which became somewhat of a tradition for shuttle crews and those of the International Space Station expeditions, the Expedition 28 crew and the STS-135 Atlantis astronauts formed a microgravity circle for a portrait Friday July 15, 2011 aboard the orbiting complex's Kibo laboratory of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency in this image provided by NASA. The STS-135 crew consists of NASA astronauts Chris Ferguson, Doug Hurley, Sandy Magnus and Rex Walheim; the Expedition 28 crewmembers are JAXA astronaut Satoshi Furukawa, NASA astronauts Ron Garan and Mike Fossum, and Russian cosmonauts Andrey Borisenko, Alexander Samokutyaev and Sergei Volkov. Shuttle and station commanders Ferguson and Borisenko are in the 12 o'clock and six o'clock positions, respectively, on the circle. The U.S. flag pictured was flown on the first space shuttle mission, STS-1, and flew on this mission to be presented to the space station crew. It will remain onboard until the next crew launched from the U.S. will retrieve it for return to Earth. It will fly from Earth

again, with the crew that launches from the U.S. on a journey of exploration beyond Earth orbit. (AP Photo/NASA)

(AP) -- The astronauts making NASA's last shuttle flight are almost done packing up their gigantic suitcase for the ride home.

The 10 [space travelers](#) spent Sunday putting some final items in Raffaello, the Italian-made cargo canister that's the size of a bus.

"Keep going, you are almost done," encouraged Mission Control.

The compartment will be moved from the [International Space Station](#) back onto [space shuttle Atlantis](#) early Monday. It carried up tons of food, supplies and other household goods. And it will return with dozens of bundles of trash and discarded equipment.

Atlantis will undock from the space station Tuesday, after a visit of more than a week, and aim for a Thursday landing back in Florida to end 30 years of shuttle flight.

The four shuttle [astronauts](#) took some time off Sunday to relax before heading home.

In a departure from last week's string of celebrity greetings, Sunday's special message to the crew aboard Atlantis came from workers at NASA's Stennis Space Center near New Orleans. That's where the shuttle main engines were tested over the decades.

"It's time to fire up your engines - laissez les bons temps rouler!" the Stennis crowd shouted.

The wake-up music was Kool and the Gang's "Celebration," chosen by the shuttle crew before the flight.

Astronaut Sandra Magnus said the crew picked the song "to dedicate to the whole shuttle work force in celebration of everything that you've accomplished over the years."

[NASA](#) is retiring its three space shuttles, sending them to museums, so it can work on sending astronauts beyond low-Earth orbit. The goals set forth by the Obama administration: an asteroid by 2025 and Mars by the mid-2030s.

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