

# Space station supply ship exits, now packing trash

August 15 2014, by Marcia Dunn

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This TV image provided by NASA-TV shows the Orbital Sciences Cygnus resupply cargo vehicle being released from the robotic arm on the International Space Station early Friday morning Aug. 15, 2014 near the southwest coast of Africa. (AP Photo/NASA)

A commercial cargo ship has ended its month-long space station visit.

Astronauts aboard the International Space Station released the Cygnus supply ship, now full of trash for disposal early Friday. They parted company 260 miles (420 kilometers) above Africa's southwest coast.

Orbital Sciences Corp. launched the Cygnus from Virginia in mid-July under a NASA contract. The unmanned craft hauled more than 3,000 pounds (1,400 kilograms) of crucial cargo to the orbiting outpost. Now it's loaded with rubbish, some 3,500 pounds' (1,600 kilograms') worth.

"All the best wishes," German spaceman Alexander Gerst radioed to the company's flight controllers.

On Sunday, the Virginia-based Orbital Sciences will steer the craft down through the atmosphere to burn up. The six [space station](#) astronauts will attempt to record the fiery re-entry for engineering analysis. The same documentation will be done when a European supply ship departs early next year. That ship, launched from French Guiana, delivered its shipment just a few days ago.

NASA and its international partners—Russia, Europe, Japan and Canada—want to learn as much about atmospheric re-entry as possible to prepare for the space station's eventual demise in the decade or two ahead.

Orbital Sciences Corp. is one of two U.S. companies hired by NASA to deliver space station goods. The California-based SpaceX will make its next supply run next month.



This TV image provided by NASA-TV shows the Orbital Sciences Cygnus resupply cargo vehicle, now full of trash for disposal, released from the International Space Station early Friday morning Aug. 15, 2014 near the southwest coast of Africa. (AP Photo/NASA)

**More information:** NASA: [www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/sta ...  
ex.html#.U-3mj\\_ldWSo](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/sta/ex.html#.U-3mj_ldWSo)

Orbital Sciences: [www.orbital.com/](http://www.orbital.com/)

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