

Image: Orbital Science's commercial spacecraft Cygnus-1

19 February 2014



Cygnus-1 is now floating freely around Earth and will burn up harmlessly when it enters the atmosphere tomorrow.

Provided by European Space Agency

Credit: NASA/ESA

Orbital Science's commercial spacecraft Cygnus-1 left the International Space Station today, 17 February 2014, after spending around a month in space.

This image shows a previous Cygnus, the first [demonstration flight](#), as it approached the orbital outpost in September 2013. ESA astronaut Luca Parmitano and NASA astronaut Karen Nyberg caught and berthed the spacecraft with the Station's robotic arm.

Cygnus, which means swan in Greek, was the second commercial spacecraft to bring supplies to the International Space Station. Developed by US company Orbital Science, the spacecraft uses a European-built pressurised module that has a long history of use in [human spaceflight](#).

Developed by Thales Alenia Space and built in Turin, Italy, versions of the spacecraft's pressure vessel were used for ESA's Spacelab laboratory that flew on the Space Shuttle, the Columbus laboratory on the Station and ESA's own supply ship, ATV.

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