

# S.S. J.R. Thompson

OA-9 Cargo Delivery Mission to the International Space Station



James "J.R." Thompson

Orbital ATK is proud to name the OA-9 Cygnus Cargo Delivery Spacecraft after James "J.R." Thompson. Thompson was a distinguished leader in the aerospace industry who helped shape the strategy and directed the operations of Orbital ATK's predecessor company, Orbital Sciences Corporation, for nearly 25 years. Before joining Orbital, Thompson was NASA's Deputy Administrator from 1989 to 1991.

Thompson served as the company's Vice Chairman and Senior Executive Advisor after stepping down in 2011 from his role of President and Chief Operating Officer, a title he held since October 1999. Previously, he served as Executive Vice President and General Manager of the company's Launch Systems Group from 1993 to 1999, and as Executive Vice President and Chief Technical Officer from 1991 to 1993.

Prior to joining Orbital in 1991, Mr. Thompson served two years each as NASA's deputy administrator in Washington, D.C. and for three years as head of its Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Before becoming Marshall's director in 1986, he served three years as deputy director for technical operations at Princeton University's Plasma Physics Laboratory. From March to June 1986, he served as the vice chairman of the NASA task force inquiring into the cause of the Space Shuttle Challenger accident.

Previously, Thompson spent 20 years with NASA at Marshall in various positions, including associate director for engineering in the Science and Engineering Directorate and manager of the Space Shuttle Main Engine Project in the Shuttle Projects Office. He began his professional career in 1960 as a development engineer with Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in West Palm Beach, Florida. He served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1958 to 1960, and was stationed at Green Cove Springs, Florida, as an administrative officer in the Atlantic Fleet.

Thompson is the recipient of many prestigious space industry awards, including the National Space Club's Wernher von Braun Space Flight Award, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' Holley Medal, and NASA's Distinguished Public Service Medal and Distinguished Service Medals. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and the American Astronautical Society.

Thompson received a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Florida. He passed away on November 7, 2017.

Thompson's exceptional engineering expertise and his inspiring leadership motivated those around him and helped Orbital ATK to develop the highly reliable and innovative products the company is known for.