

1945 - Now

Learning to Live with the New Neighbors

Who's Got the Ball?

The Coast Guard became part of the Department of the Navy from the outset of World War II in 1941 until it was transferred to the Department of Homeland Security in 2003. Official ownership of the Lighthouse was transferred from the Coast Guard to the Air Force 45th Space Wing in 2000, but the Coast Guard still keeps the beacon operational.

The Air Force holds the responsibility to maintain the Lighthouse itself. The Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation was founded in 2002 to help the 45th Space Wing preserve, protect and interpret the Lighthouse for visitors.



The US Air Force 45th Space Wing owns the Lighthouse and its Property.

Living Next To Rockets Isn't Easy!



The Fresnel lens found a new home at Ponce Inlet Lighthouse Museum

The biggest change, at least from the Keeper's perspective, came in 1954, when the light was automated, and the last Keeper retired. The Coast Guard could now operate the Lighthouse remotely. During this time, the Air Force bought other Cape Canaveral properties in order to expand the launch area. All families were relocated off the Air Force Station.

For several decades, starting in 1969, a sea surveillance radar was mounted on the Lighthouse to allow range control officers to monitor small boats entering the launch danger area.

In 1993, it was decided the vibrations from the rocket launches were too much for the fragile 1st Order Fresnel lens and it was replaced with a DCB-224 rotating searchlight beacon.

A New Light Shines

The DCB-224 beacon is cheaper and easier to maintain and can be seen up to 24 miles out to sea.

It has two beams that rotate on an electric motor and flash twice every 4.8 seconds then go dark for 14.8 seconds.

The unit consists of a 25-inch aluminum housing with a parabolic reflector.



DCB-224 beacon