

Bombs Away! Wait - Did I Hit the Lighthouse?

During World War II, the area around what is now Cape Canaveral Space Force Station and the Kennedy Space Center was used as a bombing practice range by the nearby Banana River Naval Air Station (renamed Patrick Air Force Base in 1950, then Patrick Space Force Base in 2020). One target was located fairly close to the Lighthouse.

About 8 pm on a winter night in 1944, a student bombardier was practicing his first night bombing run. Instead of aligning his sights to the lights in the target area, he homed in on the Lighthouse by mistake and let his practice bomb fall. It landed with a bright flash and a good size puff of smoke when it detonated next to the nearby Coast Guard barracks. Luckily, there were no injuries, except to the pride and reputation of the bombardier! *

* as remembered by former Lt (jg) C. F. Bartberger, a pilot with the Air Bombers Training Unit at the time.

