



1
00:00:01,120 --> 00:00:05,980

If you listen carefully, you can almost hear the voices of yesterday's space travelers echoing

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00:00:05,980 --> 00:00:07,840

across time.

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00:00:07,840 --> 00:00:13,020

They mingle with the sound of the surf breaking on this secluded beach at NASA's Kennedy Space

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00:00:13,020 --> 00:00:15,620

Center in Florida.

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00:00:15,620 --> 00:00:21,430

This salty air has been filled with the laughter, whispers, and even tears of the men and women

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00:00:21,430 --> 00:00:26,530

who've passed through this shore's humble beach cottage, before soaring off into the vastness of

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00:00:26,530 --> 00:00:28,030

space.

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00:00:28,030 --> 00:00:33,100

Mike Mullane: "This is sacred sand out here, it really is. It's where people have made those final

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00:00:33,100 --> 00:00:39,320

goodbyes, and they were final. But we know it. I mean, there's nobody, no spouse,

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00:00:39,320 --> 00:00:45,430

no astronaut walks that sand that doesn't know that there is a possibility that this is forever."

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00:00:45,430 --> 00:00:50,830

For years it's been the quiet, unassuming preflight retreat where astronauts have

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00:00:50,830 --> 00:00:56,330

reflected as they stood on the threshold of their dream: space travel.

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00:00:56,330 --> 00:01:02,030

The cozy house sits perched above the dunes at the edge of a pristine beach that stretches

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00:01:02,030 --> 00:01:05,700

undisturbed as far as the eye can see.

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00:01:05,700 --> 00:01:09,180

Its nearest neighbors are launch complexes.

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00:01:09,180 --> 00:01:15,550

Bob Cabana: "Not all of our time is totally full getting briefings or preparing to go fly,

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00:01:15,550 --> 00:01:20,700

and it can get kind of claustrophobic over there just being cooped up in crew quarters and it's

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00:01:20,700 --> 00:01:24,500

really nice to be able to go out to the beach house and just walk on the beach and just sit there

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00:01:24,500 --> 00:01:31,140

and see the ocean, and walk up and down the beach, pick up shells, listen to the waves lapping on

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00:01:31,140 --> 00:01:33,580

the shore."

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00:01:33,580 --> 00:01:37,480

Mike Mullane: "Before the first mission, to sit out here and look at the sky and say,

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00:01:37,480 --> 00:01:45,170

'I'm next! I'm next! It's going to happen! I'm going to go into space!' That would just overwhelm

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00:01:45,170 --> 00:01:51,950

me. What history of these people that have walked through this beach house, who have walked on that

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00:01:51,950 --> 00:01:57,200

beach out there, said goodbye to their spouses in the shadows of the rockets they were

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00:01:57,200 --> 00:02:01,260

launching on tomorrow. I felt totally overwhelmed by that reality. That I was now part of it,

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00:02:01,260 --> 00:02:06,520

that I was walking the beach and saying goodbye in the shadow of the rocket that I was

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00:02:06,520 --> 00:02:08,870

going to be riding tomorrow."

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00:02:08,870 --> 00:02:14,220

The expanses of sea and sky make it a fitting place for astronauts and their loved ones.

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00:02:14,220 --> 00:02:17,420

Janice Voss: "To me the most special time at the beach house is when you can go out there with your

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00:02:17,420 --> 00:02:22,330

family. There's one barbeque thing where you can bring out guests, and my parents

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00:02:22,330 --> 00:02:26,790

got to come out. And the beach house has been there forever and that history that stretches

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00:02:26,790 --> 00:02:31,590

out for so long and to share that, and let my family meet the other crew members in a

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00:02:31,590 --> 00:02:38,200

more casual setting, It's nice to have that really quite time to be with your family and

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00:02:38,200 --> 00:02:41,580

share that history and culture with them so they feel a little more connected to

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00:02:41,580 --> 00:02:42,800

all that's going on."

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00:02:42,800 --> 00:02:48,370

Bob Cabana: "I looked for perfect little seashells. I got four of them, one for each of

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00:02:48,370 --> 00:02:54,670

my children and one for my wife. And I wrote a little message to each of them inside the shell.

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00:02:54,670 --> 00:02:58,130

And I said, "Here, you hold this and give one to each of the kids and you hold on

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00:02:58,130 --> 00:03:03,320

to this when I'm launching and that's a little something of me with you during that time that

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00:03:03,320 --> 00:03:09,790

I'm launching into space." And somewhere I think they've all still got their seashells."

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00:03:09,790 --> 00:03:13,780

Mike Mullane: "You're boundlessly joyful at the thought of riding into space again, your

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00:03:13,780 --> 00:03:20,740

overwhelmed with that joy, but at the same time you have, as she said, the fear factor.

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00:03:20,740 --> 00:03:27,790

That's hard to get your mind around that. But it is. That's the reality of an astronaut's life,

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00:03:27,790 --> 00:03:35,080

and a spouse's life, in those final days and hours before a mission. Fear and joy overwhelming you."

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00:03:35,080 --> 00:03:42,610

Donna Mullane: "And it's exhausting! It was quite emotional when everybody leaves.

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00:03:42,610 --> 00:03:48,550

You're by yourself and you see each of the couples of the crew going off in different directions,

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00:03:48,550 --> 00:03:55,330

knowing that it's a private moment and they are dealing with their own anxiety in their way."

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00:03:55,330 --> 00:04:01,150

Structurally, the two-story, wood-frame and concrete block house never really outgrew its humble,

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00:04:01,150 --> 00:04:07,720

early 1960s beginnings as part of the oceanfront Neptune Beach subdivision.

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00:04:07,720 --> 00:04:15,750

The development and its land were bought in 1963 -- for the grand sum of \$31,500.

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00:04:15,750 --> 00:04:22,320

The acquisition was to accommodate the expansion of what would become NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

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00:04:22,320 --> 00:04:25,780

Bob Cabana: "The beach house is a unique facility here at the Kennedy Space Center,

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00:04:25,780 --> 00:04:32,020

and it's changed a lot over time. Of course it was originally a home that somebody was living in

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00:04:32,020 --> 00:04:38,050

when the Kennedy Space Center was built. When eminent domain took over all the

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00:04:38,050 --> 00:04:43,310

property down here to build our spaceport the beach house was there and it became ours."

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00:04:43,310 --> 00:04:49,380

The cottage was somehow spared the fate of the nearby residences and a store and gas station.

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00:04:49,380 --> 00:04:56,440

Mike Mullane: "I don't know who the far-thinking person was that preserved this house from

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00:04:56,440 --> 00:04:59,380

destruction -- there were other houses here when this was private property,

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00:04:59,380 --> 00:05:05,620

but thank you for doing it. I'm sure they could not have imagined how this would be part

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00:05:05,620 --> 00:05:08,480

of space history, manned space flight history."

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00:05:08,480 --> 00:05:14,530

Now, just as in the past, the little house by the sea now stands ready to welcome the final

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00:05:14,530 --> 00:05:16,510

shuttle crews and their families.