

Seven people arrested in Groom Lake incident

By Keith Rogers
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Seven Las Vegans face trespassing counts in Lincoln County after they were arrested near the Air Force's secret Groom Lake base, where they said they were surrounded by men in camouflage fatigues who pointed automatic rifles at them.

Lincoln County District Attorney Thomas Dill confirmed that the seven — Constance Ruiz, Cissy Ruiz, David Ruiz, William Fitzgerald, Kevin Fitzgerald, Tim Fitzgerald and Gilbert Narvaiz — were arrested Sunday and held at a Pioche detention center until their release Monday.

Dill said Tuesday he does not

know who or what agency made the arrests, or exactly where the arrests took place. He said he will wait for a report from the Lincoln County sheriff's office to decide about filing a complaint.

The seven are set to make their first court appearance on the misdemeanor counts a week from today in Alamo.

Connie Ruiz said the group had driven three vehicles to view the base from public land, where they intended to have a picnic near Freedom Ridge.

"We wanted to go up and see what it was before they closed down the area," she said, referring to an Air Force request to withdraw public lands for a more

extensive buffer zone around the base. Secret aircraft are believed to be tested there.

Connie Ruiz said the group had traveled along a dusty trail to a turn-around point when they were suddenly surrounded by men wearing camouflage fatigues who aimed M-16s at them.

"They held us at gun point, searched our vehicles, and detained us for approximately two hours before the Highway Patrol came. They never read us our rights," she said.

William Fitzgerald said he and the others were placed in handcuffs and body chains.

"We only got on the wrong road, for cryin' out loud. What is

this. (Nazi) Germany? There was no reason to do what they did. That was overkill," he said.