

Nevada's UFO Heaven  
Prying Eyes Look In on Secret Air Base  
Associated Press  
The Washington Post  
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Rachel, NV -- Chuck Clark's search for UFOs brought him to this desert outpost, a place with happenings so bizarre a state lawmaker wants to name the road through here "Extraterrestrial Alien Highway."

Clark has yet to encounter flying saucers, but one thing is certain: Something is out there.

Folks you'll meet at the Little A'Le'Inn, the only restaurant in town say they're entertained some nights by strange lights and sonic booms.

Space aliens? A more likely cause is a military base so secret the government cryptically acknowledges its existence only as an "operating location." Locals refer to the installation as "Dreamland" or Area 51."

Hard-core UFO and conspiracy buffs like Clark are convinced the government is keeping recovered alien craft and working alongside little bug-eyed creatures at the sprawling complex, just 20 miles south of here across the rocky Groom Mountain Range.

Aside from classified man-made technologies, the military says there's nothing unearthly out here -- only sagebrush and the locals' overactive imaginations.

Until recently, the military flat-out denied the presence of a base. today, officials do acknowledge something's going on outside Rachel.

"We don't have UFOs out there," said May. Mary Feltault, an Air Force spokeswoman. "What goes on out there is classified."

But you can decide for yourself. With a four-wheel-drive truck and lots of nerve, you can sneak a peek at "Dreamland" -- even though the military recently made it much tougher to do so.

In early May, the Interior Department agreed to give the Air Force control of nearly 4000 acres of public land adjacent to Area 51, including an ideal vantage spot called Freedom Ridge.

For the 100 residents of Rachel, many of whom have established a cottage industry based on UFO fascination, the decision won't really change things.

Locals including Pat Travis, co-owner of the Little A'Le'Inn, say they'll just use other mountain ridges to view the base and will

keep searching for what's really going on.

Visitors to Rachel can still get a guided trip to other ridges overlooking the base or swap flying saucer stories and order an "Alien burger" at the Little A'Le'Inn -- though they can't yet ride down the Extraterrestrial Alien Highway suggested by state assemblyman Roy Neighbors.

Travis and her husband Joe, share Clark's enthusiasm for space-age --or just spacey -- occurrences. They tell of a white beam of light that blazed through their closed back door on morning several years ago.

"I can feel their presence," Pat Travis said. "I get goose bumps when I think of them."

Then there's Glenn Campbell, a former computer software developer who operates what he calls the Secrecy (sic) Oversight Council from a trailer her rents for \$215 a month.

Campbell also puts out a newsletter and an "Area 51 Viewer's Guide" that helps the curious avoid being arrested by the guards who prowl the base's perimeter.

Others who frequent the area include Bob Lazar of Las Vegas, a self-described physicist who claims he worked at the base -- on one of nine captured alien saucers to determine how its power source worked.

Area 51 reportedly served as a laboratory for the U-2 spy plane and later the SR-71 spy plane, the B-2 stealth bomber and the F-117A stealth fighter.

Among other rumors: The base has a stable of aircraft obtained from defecting Soviet fliers and is the proving ground for a \$15 billion spy plane, the Aurora, that can do 5000 mph.

Aviation Week & Space Technology recently said radar-evading helicopters and oddly shaped pilotless spy planes are being developed at the 40-year old base, with money from secret "black budgets" that don't appear in any federal budget allotments.

Clark said exotic military aircraft developed at the base may be mistaken for UFOs. But sometimes fast-moving soundless pulsating balls of light that appear in the sky just seem to be from another world, he said.

"They may not be UFOs to the Air Force. They know what they are. But they are UFOs to us," he said.

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