

The Groom Lake Desert Rat

"The Naked Truth from Open Sources."

Area 51/Nellis Range/TTR/NTS/S-4?/Weird Stuff/Desert Lore

An on-line newsletter.

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Direct from the "UFO Capital," Rachel, Nevada.

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In this issue...

- [Media Communications 102](#)
- [Freedom Ridge Closure Looms](#)
- [Proposed Outing](#)
- [Lazar Timeline Released](#)
- [Mysterious Larry King Stopover](#)
- [Intel Bitties](#)

Media Communications 102

Commonsense Rules For The Defense Manager

We know that the Rat is read by leaders in the Pentagon, and we like to think that they look to us for the sort of impartial reporting and down-to-earth advice they can't get from their own people. We see our role as one of education. We do not seek to destroy the military or damage national defense; instead, we are trying to make the military stronger by introducing defense managers to important concepts in psychology, philosophy, politics and American society.

One of these is public relations. We know what you generals are thinking: that the news media are the slime of the earth and would be an even better target for the Sons and Daughters of Liberty than Las Vegas. Nonetheless, the presence of a bloodthirsty press will always be a fact of life in our democracy. They represent, in fact, one of those unalienable rights that we go to war in distant lands to defend. Like the unpleasant, humiliating process of wringing funds from Congress, dealing with the press is just something the military has to live with. The tone of press coverage, especially in peacetime, plays a major role in funding decisions and the degree of autonomy the military is accorded. The military can either take charge of the process and use the press to its advantage, or it can ignore the wolves, plead "no comment" and be eaten alive.

Starting at a very basic level, there are certain things you just shouldn't do if you want to maintain the respect of the press and your ultimate liberty and funding. One of these points is summed up in a song we once heard....

You don't tug on Superman's cape.
You don't spit into the wind.
You don't pull on the mask of the old Lone Ranger....

AND YOU DON'T TAKE THE CAMERAS OR VIDEO TAPE OF A MAJOR MEDIA ORGANIZATION!

Open your textbooks to page 15 for a further restatement of this principle. (We are referring, of course, to *Meeting the Press: A Media Survival Guide for the Defense Manager* [[DR#11](#)].)

"Because of competitive pressures of the trade, the fraternity of reporters is not exactly a brotherhood of congeniality. In actual fact, rival reporters find it easy to build up an abiding dislike for one another, although they normally take great pains to hide their animosities from outsiders. But in spite of their differences, there is one time when all media representatives will lay their dislikes aside and join forces, place their wagons in a circle, and stand shoulder to shoulder fighting as one. That occasion is whenever they perceive a threat to the freedom of the press and their right to publish or broadcast whatever they choose."

The ongoing Groom Lake conflict has turned into a classic example of how not to respond to the press. We were especially surprised and amused to see the authorities seize the video tapes of yet another TV crew, KNBC of Los Angeles [DR#12]. The Secret Police never learn! Nothing guarantees that your story will get top play in the evening newscast like trying in some way to suppress it. Even returning the confiscated tape won't end the story. Instead of making the reporter quake in his boots, such an encounter almost assures his eternal devotion to the story. Every reporter is quick to express his outrage at any such obstruction, but you know, deep down, that this is just the sort of challenge he lives for.

At last report, the video tape seized on July 19 has still not been returned. Of the five tapes taken by force and without a warrant, the Air Force is prepared to release only one. The rest, evidently, are a threat to national security. The crew says they did not photograph the unacknowledged Groom Lake base, since they did not want to provoke the authorities, and there was already plenty of stock footage available. They used only a wide angle lens, pointed away from the base, to interview activist Campbell on Freedom Ridge, in plain sight of the anonymous guards. Unfortunately, a wide angle lens means that some area of empty military land adjoining the border is bound to appear somewhere in the frame. Everyone in the class knows about those anal-retentive OSI guys (Office of Special Investigations) who adhere without question to their given rules no matter how objectively absurd. If a photo was taken in downtown Las Vegas and happened to show restricted mountains in the background, that film has to be impounded and stamped "Top Secret," even if no detail is shown, no installations are visible and 10,000 better pictures are already in circulation.

Lawyers from the NBC network are said to be pursuing the matter, but the absence of the video tapes has not prevented the show from going on. KNBC will supposedly run a story on Groom tonight (8/1, 5:00pm, L.A. ch. 4. Maybe also sat.K2/tr.3). They do have choice shots of activist Campbell being hauled away in handcuffs after he tried to interfere with the seizure, and the rest of the story can be adequately reconstructed using footage taken by other stations.

Seeing the AF humiliate itself in front of yet another TV network, we are reminded of the poor stooge in the vaudeville act who always falls for the same gag again and again--the banana peel on the floor, the pie in the face. After the laughter dies down, we feel only sadness. The military's wisdom and flexibility in dealing with domestic opponents are a reflection on how it will respond to the rapidly changing enemy it is bound to face in the future. The threats of the tomorrow will not be ponderous Soviets or ego-bound Saddams. They are going to be swift-moving, opportunistic terrorist groups resembling more sophisticated versions of the Sons and Daughters of Liberty and not unlike Psychospy himself. Having superior weaponry does not count as much as having some subtlety and brains and a leadership that is responsive enough to recognize a problem at its early stages and deal with it decisively before it becomes intractable.

Protecting Classified Information

To future students of military public relations, the Groom Lake debacle of the mid-1990s will serve as a textbook example of how not to preserve classified information. The old Cold War strategy for protecting a sensitive program was to classify EVERYTHING associated with it, including its funding, the fact of its existence and anything nominally trivial which might imply such a project. Public relations, in those days, consisted only of various forms of "no comment," enhanced by patriotic sermons about those who died in previous wars. If you acknowledged even the most tactically useless information, the theory went, it would start the ball rolling and soon the whole program would be compromised.

What was not recognized is that in attempting to classify every nut and bolt, every meal served in the commissary and every trivial fact the rest of the world knew already, the entire security apparatus became devalued and unenforceable. The very reason the public was attracted to Groom was its surreal nonexistence. Properly classified information was lumped together with the top-secret bar, tennis courts, prime rib dinners and decades of accumulated failures and abuses

that were of no value to any foreign enemy. When the trash finally got thrown out, unfortunately so did some valuable resources.

In the end, what broke the base was not Campbell and the TV crews, but the disenchantment of its own workers. The key to keeping secrets, it was found, was not rules and enforcement but trust and cooperation. Once the workers lost their faith that the government was on their side, and once they felt, rightly or wrongly, that their secrecy oath was working more against the interests of the country than for it, then no amount of threats, sermons or OSI thugs could keep them from speaking out about what they felt was wrong. For a time, it was easy to bury embarrassments and human problems under the claim of national security, but all those skeletons accumulated in the closet, and when the door was opened just a crack, they fell out all at once.

Freedom Ridge Closure Looms

It now looks increasingly likely that Freedom Ridge and White Sides will be closed to the public sometime in October. There is still opportunity for comments, protests and appeals, and it is remotely possible that BLM could turn down or delay the AF request. Realistically, though, visitors should not plan on these near-in viewpoints remaining open past October 15.

There will be a 30 day "protest" period between an affirmative BLM decision and the actual closing of the land, and we will certainly report this warning in the Rat. Of course, we'll schedule a party at the very end and make sure the world doesn't overlook the passage.

Through Aug. 26, the BLM is offering the public the opportunity to comment on the transfer of the land from the Caliente Management Plan to the Nellis Range Management Plan--an obscure bureaucratic step in the withdrawal. Acting District Manager Gary Ryan says that since most people do not understand how this comment period differs from the previous one, he will continue to accept comments on the withdrawal itself. If you so choose, you can send your harangues to him at:

Gary Ryan, Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 26569
Las Vegas, Nevada 89126

It seems to us, though, that almost everything worthwhile has already been said. Recently, we had a chance to examine the application case file packed with clippings, transcripts, back issues of the Rat, hundreds letters of protest and even a couple letters of AF support. The file is almost a foot high now--a fascinating cultural and anthropological record that captures a slice of our human history. The vast majority of the comments are wonderfully, magically irrelevant to the withdrawal process and entirely beyond the scope of BLM's mandate. There are eloquent warnings about the dangers of government secrecy and impassioned pleas on behalf of the captive aliens. Angry demands written in pseudo-legalese assert that the AF and BLM have no authority in Nevada to begin with and that everything must be given back to the state or the Indians. Throughout the file, we are impressed by the passion and patriotism of the authors. Clearly, this withdrawal has touched a public nerve, but unfortunately most of the vented emotion does not have much bearing on the land transfer process.

If the withdrawal is delayed or derailed, it will be on obscure procedural grounds. Should an Environmental Impact Statement have been required instead of an Environmental Assessment? Were the application requirements outlined in federal regulations properly followed? The BLM district office does not have the facilities to evaluate UFO claims, social priorities or defense policies. It can only process the application according to defined environmental and land-use procedures, then pass it upstairs to the State Director in Reno. He, in turn, will probably refer it to the secretarial level in Washington, and there the final decision could be made by voodoo and sorcery, by studying the entrails of sacrificed animals and maybe not looking at the case file at all.

Sometime before the close of the comment period, Psychospy will make our own final argument against the withdrawal,

which we will print in the Rat. BLM expects to issue a decision about 2-3 weeks later, or mid-September. If the withdrawal is supported, there will then be a 30-day protest period before the land is closed. This is the "last call" to visit Freedom Ridge. After the land is closed, the decision can still be appealed.

If the withdrawal goes through, it is hard to call this a "victory" for the AF. The application itself created a powerful opposition movement that won't go away when Freedom Ridge is taken. In a way, the loss of the land may be the best thing that could happen to the movement, because it shifts the debate to a higher political and philosophic level.

And remember the punch line: The Groom Lake base can still be seen from several mountains that are higher and further back. tmahood@netcom.com and spouse have surveyed a trail to the top of the Tikaboo Peak viewpoint, 13 miles east of F.R. His concise "Tikaboo Peak Guide" is included in the current edition (2.04) of the *Area 51 Viewer's Guide*. (Owners of previous editions can send us an SASE for a free Tikaboo Guide.) When F.R. is closed, we expect to publish edition 3.0 of the Viewer's Guide, with new advice and viewpoints.

Proposed Outing

We will organize a final camp-out and End-of-the-World get-together on F.R. when we learn the date of its closure. In the meantime, many people have expressed an interest in holding another gathering before the end of the summer.

We propose that this summer event be called the FREEDOM RIDGE/TIKABOO PEAK FREE-SPEECH ENCAMPMENT, with the nominal purpose of loudly protesting the NBC tape seizure but the real aim of having a good time. We suggest that this event could be held either Labor Day weekend (Sept. 3-5) or the weekend before (Aug. 27-28). Saturday night could be spent around the campfire at Freedom Ridge, while on Sunday interested hikers could head to Tikaboo Peak for the official grand opening of the Summit Trail. (That hike is a strenuous 1-1/2 hours each way through forested alpine terrain from Badger Spring, accessible by dirt roads from US-93.)

The protest part of the outing (merely an idea at this point) is to suggest that everyone who objects to warrantless film and video seizures bring a camera of their own. Cameras can either be real or convincing fake ones, and it is not necessary that they be loaded with film. In addition, illegal photos of the base, as published by the Russians and in major periodicals, would be both sold and given away among participants. Imagine 50 or 100 people with "cameras" all pointed at the base. The Sheriff would be informed (He gets the Rat.) and would be invited to investigate and haul away as many of the perpetrators as he could. (Unfortunately, the Sheriff's Dept. no longer occupies the now-abandoned Detention Center and has capacity for only a handful of prisoners at the Court House.) Fond memories would be evoked of "Peace Camp" and the anti-nuclear protests at Mercury in the 80s.

Of course, this is all merely a suggestion at this point--an idle dream that we set forward here for public comment. Psychospy would never recommend, at least on his own, that people bring cameras to a Groom Lake viewpoint. Any recommendation like this would have to be made by consensus of the White Sides Defense Committee.

Anyone with thoughts to offer can drop us a line. Which weekend is best? Should we or should we not bring "cameras"? If we go ahead with the encampment, dates and details will be printed in the next Rat.

[\[Later report on event in DR#15\]](#)

Lazar Timeline Released

"UFO mechanic" Bob Lazar, who claims to have reverse engineered alien spacecraft at Papoose Lake, also claims to have degrees from both MIT and Cal-Tech. He explains the absence of any academic records by suggesting that the government has made them "disappear." Lazar is a man without a past, the story goes, and not even his birth certificate can be found.

It turns out now that no records could be found because no one has looked very hard. By digging through the archives of county clerks and city recorders offices, our colleague tmahood@netcom.com and his internet buddies have assembled a wealth of public records on Lazar. His birth certificate still has not been located (perhaps because this requires more information and his permission), but other records available to anyone show Lazar's marriages, real estate transactions, a bankruptcy, a pandering charge and the death of a spouse. tmahood has condensed this information into a chronological timeline of Lazar's life, a 10-page document now circulating on the net.

For the sake of decency, Lazar's social security number and other current identifying data have been deleted from the timeline. Publishing the dates of Lazar's other lifetime events may also strike some people as an invasion of privacy, but Lazar's dramatic UFO claims and the known inconsistencies of his personal life beg a chronological analysis. The timeline pretty much extinguishes the notion that Lazar earned any degree from MIT or Cal-Tech: There just wasn't enough time. It seems certain he worked for Los Alamos Laboratories, as he claims, but it is still not clear in what capacity. The rest of the timeline, while nailing down Lazar's general whereabouts, seems to raise more questions than it answers. In one curious three-day period, Lazar appears to have been married to two different women until one of them committed suicide. No autopsy was performed. Lazar then married the other woman AGAIN a few months later, she using a different name. Lazar was going through bankruptcy proceedings at the time, which may explain some of the strange maneuvers.

Many readers may call Lazar a fraud, but that doesn't answer much. His motivation remains unknown, and the man himself is still a fascinating cipher. Needless to say, he has not approved this document and his cooperation was not sought. Nonetheless, tmahood says that he is willing to conduct further research if Lazar can point out any specific errors in the document. The timeline should be available at the FTP site below. If you are unable to obtain it there, you may request it by email from tmahood@netcom.com. The internet-impaired may obtain a hard copy from Psychospy for \$2 (to cover copying and postage).

Mysterious Larry King Stopover

Here's fodder for your conspiracy theories. According to an article in the July 27 *Las Vegas Review-Journal*...

An airliner carrying talk show host Larry King was running on empty when it made an emergency landing at Nellis Air Force Base.

[American Airlines] Flight 1374 from Dallas landed at the base runway about 1:50 pm Saturday because of 'critical fuel,' said Air Force Maj. George Sillia, a base spokesman....

All of the passengers -- except King, who received a military escort to the convention -- had to stay on the plane for about 90 minutes, Sillia said.

As reported in the *Washington Post* [[DR#11](#)], King will be doing a TV special on Area 51, broadcast live from Rachel on Oct. 1. ("Has Larry King been reduced to this?") Is it a coincidence that King's jet HAPPENS to be diverted to Nellis two months before the show? Nellis manages at least the land surrounding Area 51, and Major Sillia is the man who journalists go to for an authoritative "no comment" about the base. Nellis AFB is only ten miles from McCarran Airport, the plane's intended destination. Strange it should be diverted here, isn't it?

What we want to know is, WHAT HAPPENED DURING THAT MILITARY ESCORT? We are reminded of Eisenhower's mysterious "dental appointment," when he disappeared for a few hours and could have been engaged in some sort of extraterrestrial contact. Was it really "critical fuel" that forced King's plane to land, or was this just an excuse to brief him on the alien presence? Or maybe the military created this charade to replace him with a LARRY KING CLONE, identical to the talk show host in every way except that when Oct. 1 comes along, he'll follow the script of the ruling elite.

ANYTHING could have happened during that military escort, and only one thing is certain: The plane's diversion to Nellis "couldn't possibly be coincidence."

Intel Bitties

CAMPBELL ARRAIGNMENT. As reported in [DR#12](#), Glenn Campbell's arraignment on obstruction charges will be held this Weds., Aug. 3, at 1:30 pm in Alamo Justice Court. An arraignment is a brief and usually uninteresting hearing in which formal charges are filed and a trial date set. Campbell, like O.J. Simpson, is expected to plead "absolutely, 100 percent not guilty." He has reserved comment on his defense until after the arraignment, but knowing Mr. Campbell we think he'll have fun. The worst penalty is probably a fine, and being accused of a crime usually increases ones legal powers of investigation and advocacy.

TRESPASSER CASE LINGERS ON. In [DR#11](#), we reported that the case of the January trespassers had finally been resolved. Not so. The equipment confiscated by the Cammo Dudes from their impounded cars has still not been returned: binoculars, telescope and a camera (with no film). We consider the delay yet another example of military P.R. bungling. The equipment is of no value to AF and not returning it simply assures that this irritating case, like the little Energizer bunny, will keep on going and going and going...

"STUPID FAGGOT" VANISHES. The graffiti on a remote Restricted Area sign reported in [DR#11](#) ("Glenn Campbell is a stupid faggot and so are his loyal followers!") has disappeared as mysteriously as it came. It looks like someone washed it off neatly with a spray cleaner without touching our "Misplaced Sign" marking or the big "X". Did an officer read about it in the Rat, and pass down a clean-up order? Did we get someone in trouble? (Sorry, guys.)

HAT, BOOK AVAILABLE IN PENTAGON. The Groom Lake patch has been selling like gangbusters at Fort America, the military memorabilia shop in the Outer Concourse at the Pentagon. Now, two more of our products are available there: the Groom Lake hat and the *Area 51 Viewer's Guide*. We hope our local readers will check out the merchandise. (Either that or suppress it, which would be far more newsworthy.)

Reader Responses: [Glenn Campbell Death Pool](#)

[[Next Issue](#) | [Previous Issue](#) | [Rat Home](#) | [Area 51 Page](#) | [Psychospy Home](#)]

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