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For more recent information about Area 51, see the new [Area 51 Research Center](#) maintained by Don Emory.

Unusual View of Groom Lake

From: nelson clayton <clayton@spacecomputer.com>
Date: Thu, 11 Sep 1997 20:28:23 -0700

On the afternoon of Saturday, August 30, 1997, I flew on Southwest Airlines from Los Angeles International Airport to Salt Lake City. Normally, the flight (which I typically do on a weekday) takes 1 hour and 40 minutes, and the flight path pretty much follows I-15, passing directly over Las Vegas. This time (perhaps because it was a weekend and Nellis Test Range airspace was partially open), we took a shortcut which reduced the flight time by 20 minutes. We flew north and west of the normal route. I kept an eye out for Groom Lake, expecting perhaps to glimpse a sliver of it near the distant northern horizon. I took a break from my intense scanning of the horizon to look at a nearby dry lake which I had noticed out of the corner of my eye, and whaddaya know.....it was Groom! I am bad at estimating distances. Perhaps we were as close as 25 miles or as far as 45, but looking down at it through the clear afternoon air from 35,000 feet up, I was astonished at how relatively nearby it appeared to be. Although the line-of-sight distance was probably substantially greater than it would be from Tikaboo Peak, the angle was much better. One can get a very nice view of the runway from this altitude, and can spot the largest of the buildings without optical aid. Thinking that I would be treated to a repeat performance on my return flight the following Sunday afternoon, I brought my mega-binoculars aboard the plane, only to find that we flew the normal route over Vegas, and the weather was partly cloudy.

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Created: Sep 12, 1997