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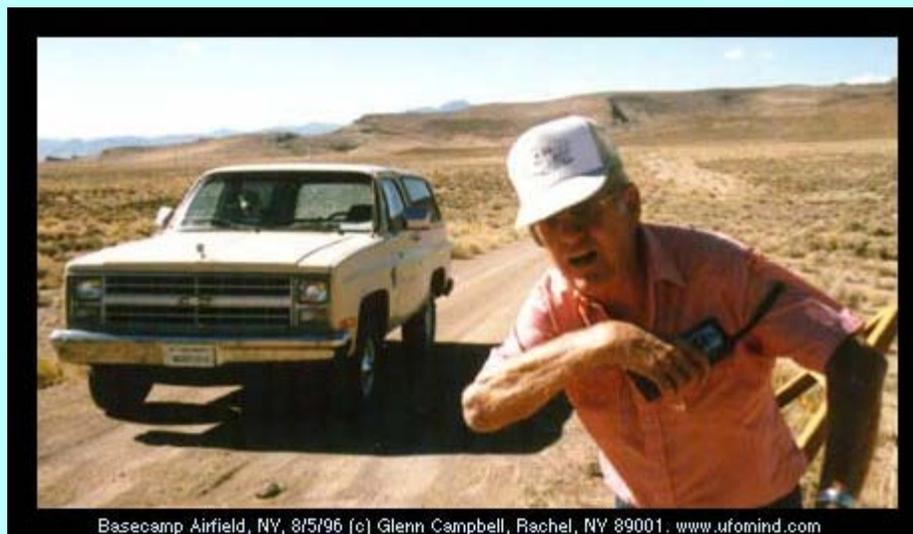
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# Basecamp Airfield

*"Secret" Auxiliary Airfield in Plain Sight  
Presumably Supporting Area 51*

**Basecamp Airfield** is an auxiliary airstrip and support facilities adjacent to Route US-6 about 10 miles northeast of Warm Springs. This is a "secret" facility in plain sight: Signs on the fence say only the "U.S. Government" owns the facility, and personnel there will not divulge any further information. Circumstantial evidence indicates this facility is operated by a government contractor on behalf the Air Force Flight Test Center, probably in support of testing programs at Area 51. Basecamp is in line with the runway at Groom Lake, making it a possible emergency field for aborted take-offs of test aircraft from there.



Basecamp Airfield, NV, 8/5/96 (c) Glenn Campbell, Rachel, NY 89001. www.ufomind.com

The Troll of Basecamp

[Photos of Basecamp](#)

## Official Description

*Special Nevada Report*, the Air Force and DOE's report on planned land use in Nevada, gives this description...

### **Base Camp and Halligan Mesa**

Base Camp and Halligan Mesa are withdrawn by the Air Force and occupy approximately 600 acres in Hot Creek Valley in north central Nye County. Base Camp is located 60 miles east of Tonopah on U.S. 6. A county road passes through Base Camp land. Halligan Mesa is located approximately 15 miles northeast of Base Camp along U.S. Highway 6 and then 3 miles northwest along a dirt road. There are no proposed changes in ownership, mission, boundaries, or use of Base Camp and Halligan Mesa through the year 2000.

An electronics and communications facility on Halligan Mesa, and an associated support area at Base Camp, are used for collecting data for Air Force testing programs conducted in the vicinity of the Tonopah Test Range (TTR) and the Nellis North Range. Base Camp is used as a staging and support area for field personnel and as a recreation area for military and contractor personnel. Base Camp has a recently extended and improved airstrip, several buildings for sleeping quarters, shop and maintenance buildings, and a recreation building. Base Camp is manned by three to six people. Halligan Mesa is unmanned and a helicopter pad is located near the facility (Source: E. Tilzey, personal communication, 1988).

## **History & Field Report**

Basecamp was once controlled by the Atomic Energy Commission as the base camp for the Project Faultless underground nuclear test to the north. It was later taken over by the Air Force, which built a modern 7300 foot runway. The runway, equipped with modern navigation aids, is shown as "closed" on air charts and is marked with an "X" painted on either end. Adjacent to the southwest end of the runway is a compound of housing a support buildings. The base employs no more than a dozen people, and facilities for aircraft are minimal. There is a well-equipped fire station, and many fire extinguishers are positioned along the runway, but there are no hangars or other places to store aircraft. There appear to be no aircraft at all stationed at this facility.

The support compound is divided in two by a public road, Tybo Road. North of the road is a residential area with several double-wide mobile homes and what look like administration buildings. Here there is a playground set and a gazebo, indicating that children have lived here. (None were apparent, however.) South of Tybo Road is a maintenance compound consisting of the fire station and several large metal buildings. There are about two dozen vehicles parked here, including a treaded vehicle reminiscent of those used on ski slopes. Electricity for the facility is provided by an adjacent transformer substation, fed by power lines along the road.

Measured in the field by GPS, the heading of the airstrip is 29° (NNE), and the length of pavement is 1.38 miles (7285 feet +/-75 feet). The airstrip is freshly paved, and just to the west of the mid-point of the runway is a VOR-TAC navigation beacon. At the south end of the runway, nearest the compound, there is a small tarmac area with a small cinder-block shack and, on last inspection, several parked vehicles. The vehicles include a fuel truck labeled as "Jet Fuel JP-8." There were two portable aviation generators, as would be attached to aircraft after landing. There are no hangers, nor is there any building in the compound with doors big enough to house an aircraft.

Basecamp's location is on open ground adjacent to US-6, so all activities there could be easily observed by motorists. There are few motorists on this remote road, however, so in practice occasional landings there would go unnoticed. The nearest habitation to the south is a hay farm about two miles southwest. The nearest to the north is a Nevada highway maintenance station at Bluejay about 5 miles northeast. No other civilian residence is anywhere close, and the nearest town, Tonopah, is 60 miles away by road.

The runway lines up with a radar dome on a mountaintop about 13 miles northeast, near Sandy Summit on US-6. The land for the radar dome was withdrawn at the same time as the land for Basecamp, in April 1985. The right of way for the road from US-6 to the radar site was withdrawn by "DET 3 AFFTC" providing some circumstantial evidence that

AFFTC controls Basecamp.

Basecamp is guarded by a Troll (pictured above) who drives a government vehicle (U.S. Gov. plate 86B7376) but refuses to identify himself. On my visit, he chased me off the public road to Halligan Mesa, claiming it was government property. (Later research revealed that the radar site is closed to the public but not the road to it. Next time, I'll go back with BLM paperwork in hand and have a confrontation.)

-- Based on field survey, 8/5/96

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## Frequencies

Reader Mike P. writes:

I recon'd the Basecamp area in '94 & '95. The VORTAC frequency is 113.9 MHz, Morse identifier reads "AEC". This navigational aid is not on any civilian or unclassified military aeronautical charts. I didn't pick up any discrete voice freqs when I was there, but I would monitor Silverbow Approach (272.5, 260.95) as well as Nellis Control (253.4, 338.7, 343.0, 392.1) since it is within the Desert MOA. Another freq. may be 255.4 (?). Also three Air Route Traffic Control Centers' (ARTCC) territories all converge over the area; try monitoring Los Angeles on 343.6, Salt Lake City at 360.8 and Oakland at 319.8.

Note that the "Troll" is holding a radio in his picture above, presumably connecting him with other radios at Basecamp. A frequency counter should be able to grab that freq.

Another reader, arkel@agt.net, saw our [VORTAC photo](#) and writes:

I think that device may be a "Delta-Osiris MarkIV" It would have a hollow doughnut type of coverage, horizontal, half above and half below the ground level, giving two rings of detection. There are also rings further out as ODD harmonics. The third dimension is vertical, also round, but cone shaped. Up and down from the "vortac" The points of the cone can be peaked for distance, and also focused on a pinpoint for different purposes. Just a guess, though.

Ah... right.

On 25 Oct 1996, Dave Bethke (bethland@ix.netcom.com) writes:

On my recent road trip to southern Nevada I made an extended side trip north to Basecamp and Tybo. (Tybo is very interesting if your in to ghost towns and old mines, but thats another story.) At Basecamp I took special note of the VOR station. I found its transmission on my scanner. The identifier was AEC, in morse code, transmitted three times every 30 seconds. This indicates the station also has DME, distance measuring equipment. The frequency of the VOR is 113.9 megahertz. I didn't hear anything that would be an instrument landing system (ILS), and my scanner is not able to tune the frequency range for non directional beacons (NDB). The identifier, AEC, could have been chosen for Atomic Energy Commission. That would support Tom Mahood's comments on his web page that the airstrip was first built for support of Project Faultless.

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## Local Documents

*Stored on this server.*

- [Photo Portfolio of Basecamp](#) taken 8/5/96.
- Basecamp discussed in [Desert Rat #36](#). *It draws our interest because officers claim no knowledge of it.*
- **Land Use**

- [Public Land Order 6591](#) (50 FR 10965), effective April 12, 1985, withdraws Basecamp and the radar site as "communication site and support facilities" until April 11, 2005. Public access is excluded except for Tybo Road.
- **Two BLM rights of way** were granted for the roadway leading from US-6 to the radar site. The rights of way grant the Air Force and Air Force Flight Test Center the right to build and use this road, but not the right to exclude the public on this road. As of 8/5/96, this road was incorrectly marked with "U.S. Government No Trespassing Signs." The rights of way are...
  - **N-35951**: Covers northern half of road from US-6 to radar site. Applicant: Air Force, Headquarters, Washington, DC 20332. Apparently granted at the same time as PLO 6591. *Needs confirmation.*
  - **N-42984**: Covers southern half of road from US-6 to radar site. Applicant: Air Force, DET 3 AFFTC, Box 52B, Henderson, NV 89044. *DET 3 AFFTC is the likely operator for Groom Lake, and 89044 is the zip code for the now-defunct Pittman Station post office commonly associated with Area 51.* Length: 7920 feet. Width: 50 feet. Granted 3/11/86.
- **GPS Coordinates.** *Obtained in the field. Error +/-100 feet.*
  - Basecamp main gate on Tybo Road: 38°18.700'N, 116°16.734'W
  - Paved runway, south end: 38°18.937'N, 116°16.930'W
  - Paved runway, north end: 38°19.989'N, 116°16.197'W
  - Basecamp VOR-TAC: 38°19.382'N, 116°16.792'W
  - Turnoff for Basecamp on US-6: 38°18.600'N, 116°16.519'W (Milepoint Nye 59.9)
  - Turnoff for Radar Site on US-6: Milepoint Nye 73.7 (near Sandy Summit)
  - Location of two misplaced "No Trespassing Signs" on road to Radar Site: 38°28.562'N, 116°08.983'W / 38°27.843'N, 116°08.690'W
  - Radar site on Halligan Mesa (approx.): 38°30.6'N, 116°08.7'W
  - Bluejay state highway maintenance station: 38°22.384'N, 116°13.511'W
  - Warm Springs (junction US-6 & NV-375): 38°11.442'N, 116°22.138'W
  - Air distance to Tonopah (town): 54.4 miles, bearing 252° WSW
  - Air distance to Rachel: 54.7 miles, bearing 147° SE
  - Air distance to Area 51 (Building 170): 78.6 miles, bearing 161° SSE (341° NNW from Area 51). *Might be different from Area 51 runway.*
  - Air distance to Las Vegas: 160 miles, bearing 157° SSE
- **Related Organizations**
  - [Air Force Flight Test Center](#)
  - [Area51](#). Aircraft testing base at Groom Lake.
  - [Nellis Air Force Base & Range](#)

## External Links

*Stored on other servers*

- [Basecamp Description](#) from Center for Land Use Interpretation. [10/29/96]
- [Map of General Area](#) from Tiger Map Service. *Basecamp and Tybo Road not shown.*

[Web Search](#)

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## People & Organizations

Selected in People File

[Groom Lake Interceptors](#): (Research·interest)

## General Links

- [Tybo, Nevada](#) - A ghost town and mining operation 10 miles northwest of Basecamp - By Dave Bethke <5/29/97 #1>
- [Web Search for "Basecamp Nevada"](#) <7/18/97 #2>
- [Base Camp on the Nellis Range](#) - Brief description from Special Nevada Report - By [U.S. Air Force](#) - Published: 9/23/91 <2/2/98 #3>

## Books from our Catalog

Listed in Random Order

Book



- [Red Flag: Air Combat For The Nineties](#) by George Hall & Michael Skinner - \$14.95

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## Reader Comments

Regarding "Basecamp Airfield" - Latest First

### tracked vehicle at Base Camp

The comment about the tracked vehicle seen at Base Camp and snow caught my eye. Having worked building these things, I know they are popular as airfield crash rescue vehicles, snow or no snow. They're also useful for construction and maintenance work in areas with no roads, steep slopes, or soft ground. Sounds like Base Camp has ongoing work on-site, or expects visiting aircraft.

-- skywalker ([skywalker@diamondair.com](mailto:skywalker@diamondair.com)) 2/27/99 (#5)

### Basecamp Runway

I'm sure Glenn is correct as to the date that Basecamp was withdrawn. However, the runway was there long before 1985. I landed a King Air on the Basecamp runway out of curiosity sometime in 1982, and it was met by three guys in a jeep who invited me to leave very politely. The runway at that time was unmarked and was in reasonably good shape, though clearly not new. It may at one time have been used as some kind of emergency landing field for Dreamland, say, during the U-2 days, but it's far too short for anything more exotic, i.e. SR-71, F-117, etc. Whatever is using the 27,000 feet at dreamland would be traveling at quite a fair clip when it went off the end of the runway at Basecamp!

-- Colby Blodget ([colbyblodget@worldnet.att.net](mailto:colbyblodget@worldnet.att.net)) 2/8/99 (#4)

### Any tire marks on that runway?

I don't know if smaller planes leave tire marks when they land, but if so someone could get an idea of how much the runway is used by periodically checking.

-- Gene Handler 4/27/98 (#3)

Why in the world do they have a Snowcat at Basecamp? Does it snow there? I think not. At least not deep enough to utilize this vehicle.

-- Michael Hodson ([texweasl@panama.c-com.net](mailto:texweasl@panama.c-com.net)) 12/18/97 (#2)

- It's possible. The elevation is high and winters are highly variable. Debilitating snowstorms are possible. --GC

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PO Box 30303, Las Vegas, NV 89173 Glenn Campbell, Webmaster & Moderator

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Send corrections to [webmaster@ufomind.com](mailto:webmaster@ufomind.com)

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