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# Field Report From The Utah Launch Complex

## "The New Area 51"?



Report And [Photographs](#) By Navigator

See [Portfolio of 18 Photographs](#) for a complete tour of the facility.

Moab, Utah, June 14, 1997

A June 1997 article in Popular Mechanics reports that certain operations at Area 51 are being moved to a military facility near the Green River, in eastern Utah. [See [Link Page](#).] Finding myself in the area, it wasn't long before that old interceptor instinct took hold of me, and I just had to have a look at the place for myself. Besides, I figure our old friends from Groom Lake just won't feel at home in their new base unless there is an interceptor or two lurking about in the hills nearby. So, I packed up the welcome wagon with all sorts of goodies, and I headed out across the Utah desert.

It didn't take a whole lot of searching to find the place, which is located immediately south of Interstate 70, and about 6 miles SE of the town of Green River, Utah. To get there, simply get off I-70 at exit 162, and head south (away from town). You will immediately come to a "T" intersection. Turn left here (head east), and you are now on the main drag into what just might be the new Area 51.

The facility itself, officially referred to on signs here as the Utah Launch Complex, sits in a shallow valley roughly four miles long east-west and one mile wide north-south. It consists of a total of ten significant buildings and structures scattered throughout the valley, with a few other old foundations and poles here and there. Overall, the complex is in a terrible state of disrepair. Signs are unreadable, windows are boarded up, and most buildings are visibly damaged in some way. The power lines to all the buildings I inspected had been smashed to bits. I could find no signs of any recent activity, in fact, the place looks utterly abandoned. ....Almost too abandoned. In the four to five hours I spent snooping

around, I never saw one other person in the whole area, and so, with the Utah Launch Complex all to myself, I had quite a good look around.

Starting on the west side of the complex, at the "T" intersection mentioned above, and heading east up the main drag, the complex is laid out like this: After about 0.5 miles, there are three large, grey metal buildings on the right. These are completely fenced off, and are labelled as the Magazine Area. The first building on the right is "No.11" followed by "No. 10" and "No. 9. A white sign on the side of building No. 10 reads: "EXPLOSIVE LIMIT 200 000 LBS CLASS (?) PERSONNEL LIMIT 8, HANDLERS 4, CARRIERS 4" with a similar sign on building No. 9. These buildings sit only about 200 yards south of I-10, and are plainly visible from the freeway.

At mile 2.2 on the main drag is a four-way intersection. This cross street is labelled as Crystal Geyser Road on some maps, and indeed, a wooden sign here points south to Crystal Geyser.

Following Crystal Geyser Rd. south (to the right), immediately takes us to what I'll call the Meteorological Building, as indicated by a sign out front. The building is completely empty and in sad shape. Continuing on the dirt road to the south leads through some low hills and then generally west to the geyser and the east bank of the Green River.

Following Crystal Geyser Rd. north (to the left) leads through some hills, then down and underneath I-70 to a frontage road about one mile north. Along the way, at 0.4 miles from the intersection, is the only structure in the complex. Now almost completely unreadable, the top part says:"CONDITION OF ENTRY TO UTAH LAUNCH COMPLEX WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE" followed by a lot of small print that appears to be the usual spiel about searches and seizures while on a government installation. Farther up the road is one gravel track to the right, and one to the left, both of which lead up low hills to some old foundations, and torn-up electrical conduits and fuse boxes and stuff. Finally, at the end of the main drag, at mile 3.3, is what I will call the Main Complex.

The Main Complex consists of five major structures. It is encircled by a chain-link and barbed-wire topped perimeter fence, and is hidden from immediate view from I-70 by some hills to the north. Strangely enough, I found the gate into the main complex wide open, and there are no "No Trespassing" signs anywhere in the area (at least none that are still readable). Armed only with my ignorance and my official Area 51 Vehicle Pass as possible defenses, I found I had , quite inadvertently, driven through the open gate and into the Complex. At the center is a bunker-type, concrete and earth structure. This also appears unused for quite some time, but as it is well marked as a restricted area, I did not venture inside. I suppose this could be the entrance to the complex of top-secret underground chambers which must be around here somewhere, but I'm not sure. Immediately behind the bunker is what appears to be the launch area, now only a concrete slab with metal rails along its length. I would guess that some sort of temporary or mobile launcher was used, as no sign of any permanent launch tower still exists. A couple hundred yards south of the bunker is the largest building in the entire complex. I can only guess that this metal structure was some sort of device assembly building? Also in this Main Complex area is a large shed or garage, and a collapsed radio tower of some sort.

I'll admit that I didn't spend too much time inside the perimeter of this main complex area, and the whole time I kept glancing over my shoulder, expecting to see a Pave Hawk or a white Jeep Cherokee speeding towards me. But I never did. The place is deserted to the point of being spooky. I couldn't help but wonder: maybe this is the military's new way of hiding a secret base. Cammo dudes and helicopters only attract attention, so now they just leave a place looking abandoned, and if anyone comes snooping around, they just close the doors, pull the boards down over the windows, and hide behind the curtains until the person goes away. Well at the very least. this place is definitely a fixer-upper.

All in all it was an interesting little adventure, although not as exciting as I had secretly hoped. It seems that the glory days of the Utah Launch Complex have already come and gone. But I'll keep an eye on it for us, and I'll let everyone know if I see someone, or something, peeking out from behind the curtains.

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