



AREA 51

A CENTER OF UFO ACTIVITY

ESERCIZI SU
Work It Out!

È uno tra i progetti più coperti da segreto a livello mondiale: riguarda una zona "scelta" dagli extraterrestri per manifestarsi agli umani, o almeno, così riportano i testimoni. Qualche anno fa è stata ammessa l'esistenza di una base, e per questo ora ve ne possiamo parlare. By Talitha Linehan | Photos by Jill Simpson

LOWER INTERMEDIATE **B1**

SPEAKER 
MOLLY MALCOLM

TRACK 5 

GLOSSARY

- 1 a drive along:** un viaggio in macchina lungo (l'autostrada)
- 2 sightings:** avvistamenti
- 3 of the human kind:** del genere umano

It is late in the evening when we arrive at the top-secret military base known as Area 51. To reach the base means a **drive along**¹ the Extraterrestrial Highway, which was given its name in 1996 because of the area's association with UFO activity. There have been more **sightings**² of UFOs reported around Area 51 than anywhere else in the US.

Our bus tour is organized by MUFON (the Mutual UFO Network.) Founded in 1969, it is one of the world's oldest and largest organizations dedicated to the investigation of UFO sightings. The Area 51 Tour is the final event of a four-day annual MU-

FON symposium that was held in Las Vegas, Nevada this year, and that focused on classified space programs possibly run by the US government.

SECRET TESTING

The tour takes us 150 miles north of Las Vegas through desert terrain where few people live – at least **of the human kind**³! We stop at an alien-themed complex called Little A'Le'Inn in the city of Rachel, before arriving at the 'back gate' of Area 51. This is an entrance to the base that is constantly monitored and secured with a barrier, warning signs and security cameras. 😊



Top photo: the security gate at Area 51. It is strictly forbidden to enter the base! Above: photographs of some of the many "UFO sightings" made over the decades.

Area 51 is a United States Air Force **facility** that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) established in 1955 and located within the Nevada Test and Training Range near Groom Lake. The range was created for the development of the Lockheed U-2 strategic **reconnaissance aircraft**⁴, but the CIA **did not publicly acknowledge the existence**⁵ of Area 51 until 2013, and has never revealed its primary **purpose**⁶ today.

ALIEN DEBRIS

Most people believe that the facility is centered on the development and testing of experimental aircraft and **weapons**⁷ systems, yet some are convinced that it is also dedicated to studying UFO- and alien-related activity and technology. One of the tasks of its military personnel, they believe, is the replication of extraterrestrial aircraft that has been found **crash-landed**⁸ on Earth. ☒

GLOSSARY

- 4 reconnaissance aircraft:** aereo di ricognizione
- 5 did not publicly acknowledge the existence:** non ammise pubblicamente la sua esistenza
- 6 purpose:** scopo
- 7 weapons:** armi
- 8 crash-landed:** schiantato al suolo

INTERVIEW

COVERT OPERATIONS

Area 51 is a highly-classified US Air Force facility located in a remote part of the Nevada desert. Established in the 1950s by the CIA, there has been much speculation about the activities of the base given the considerable number of UFO sightings reported in the area. Tony Cisneros is a historian, a UFO expert, and the founder of Alpventures Top Secret Tours, a company that organizes informative visits to the area. We began by asking him what he knows about the base.

TONY CISNEROS

(STANDARD AMERICAN ACCENT)



Area 51 is America's premier aerospace and aircraft testing center. A lot of secret testing of **classified black projects** takes place there. Area

51 has made its way into¹ American, and for that matter², global pop culture over the last 20, 25 years or so. Lots and lots of movies, books and things have Area 51 in it [them] due to³ the number of unidentified sightings of objects that have been seen out there, and the sightings have been of craft that are not conventional by means of what the public knows.

STRANGE LIGHTS

And has he ever seen anything mysterious in the skies above Area 51?

TONY CISNEROS

I have. I've had two sightings myself, but these were what I call unspectacular. You know, when you talk to someone that says they've seen a UFO, you would expect them to say they saw a silver disc 30 feet away from them. It was nothing like that. These were just lights basically, but they did things that planes don't do, and I've seen a lot of planes and I have studied the sky. I know what stars look like. I know what satellites look like. And these were neither.



Left: the "Black Mailbox" became a symbol of Area 51.

GLOSSARY

- 1 has made its way into:** si è fatto strada nella...
- 2 and for that matter:** e per estensione
- 3 due to:** dovuto a
- 4 paramount:** massima, di vitale importanza
- 5 nondescript:** anonimo, che non attira l'attenzione
- 6 they really play down:** tolgono importanza
- 7 hassled:** disturbato
- 8 the moment you step over that line:** nel momento in cui oltrepassi quella linea
- 9 held at gunpoint face down:** tenuti sotto tiro e con la faccia a terra
- 10 the powers that be:** i poteri forti

you step over that line⁸, everything changes, and you are basically subject to actually getting shot. They can use deadly force out there. Just a few years back, there was a film crew from the UK, in October 2012, at the back gate of Area 51. They filmed there at the back gate for about 30 minutes before collectively, as a group, they decided to cross the line and walk past the barrier. At that point, the guards came out of the guard house and, of course, they were actually held at gunpoint face down⁹ in the dirt for three hours.

TRANSPARENCY

And, Tony Cisneros believes, if there are aliens among us now is the time to tell us.

Personally, I think it's absurd not to, but at some point, probably in the late 1940's, a decision was made in the highest levels of government to keep this a secret from the public. My guess is that the powers that be¹⁰ decided that the public was not ready for this information. Well, if we weren't ready back then, I think we're certainly ready now. ☒

MAXIMUM SECURITY

Cisneros is strictly forbidden to do tours inside the base. He says that the high level of security there is telling:

TONY CISNEROS

The security at Area 51 is paramount⁴. There's really no place in the world that rivals the security out at Area 51. Everything from motion detectors, motion sensors, very high-tech cameras, guards of course, all kinds of guards, Black Hawk helicopters, F-16s, all kinds of different security measures... The whole idea with Area 51 is to make it look from the outside in very nondescript⁵, that is to say, they really play down⁶ the fact that it is really not only America's but the world's most top secret base.

THE BRITISH ARE COMING!

Has anyone ever tried to get in?

TONY CISNEROS

Yes, that has happened, not with me or any of my groups. As long as you stay on the outside of the perimeter, their border so to speak, everything is fine. You won't get hassled⁷ by the guards. The moment

SPEAK UP EXPLAINS

Facility. Struttura. Più concretamente, un edificio di qualsiasi tipo. Si tratta di un *false friend* dal quale è molto facile lasciarsi ingannare. Per alludere alla facilità intesa come facoltà di compiere un'azione, diremo *ease* oppure *ability*. Se si tratta dell'installazione di un impianto, come per esempio di elettricità, o fognario, useremo *installation*.

Classified black projects. Progetti Top Secret. Il *black* allude ovviamente al mistero che avvolge questi progetti militari della categoria più segreta, dei quali il Governo nega persino l'esistenza. *Classified* è una semplificazione della locuzione *classified as top secret*. Quando alla fine – per un qualche motivo – vengono resi pubblici, i documenti diventano *declassified*.

