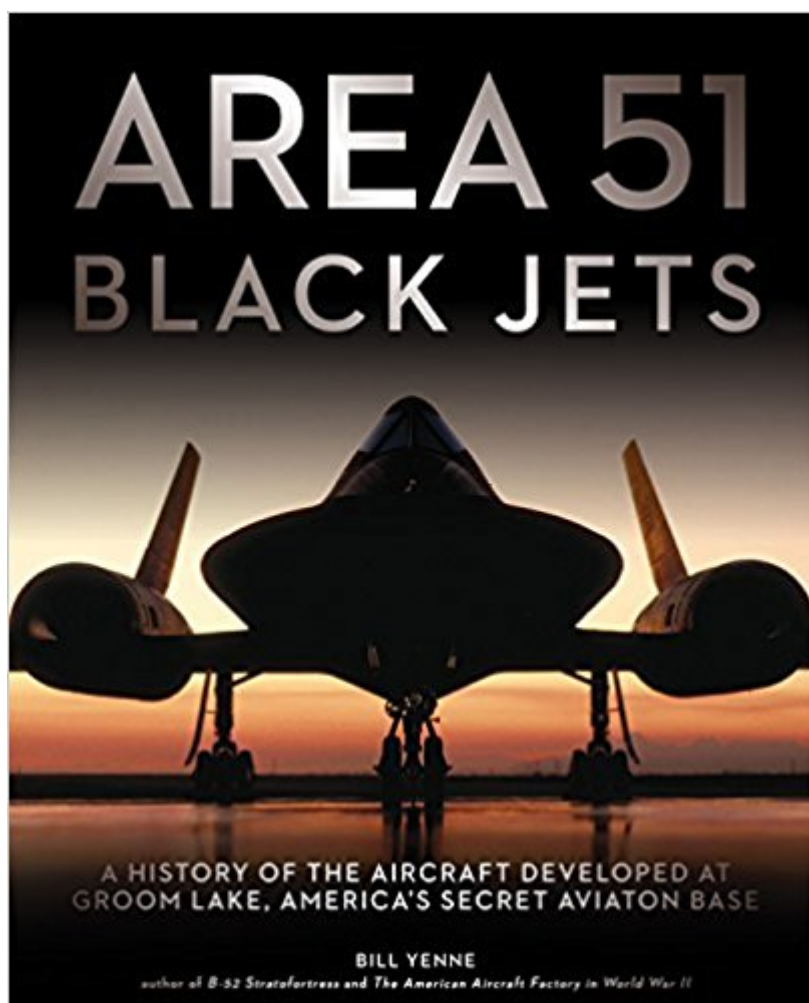


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# Area 51 - Black Jets: A History Of The Aircraft Developed At Groom Lake, America's Secret Aviation Base



## Synopsis

Area 51's most important military aviation developments are profiled in an illustrated format. When most of us think of Area 51, we think of aliens, UFOs, and controversial government cover-ups. It's easy to forget that, since the mid-1950s, the United States' famed extension of Edwards Air Force Base has served as a top-secret CIA testing ground for many of the most groundbreaking advancements in American military aviation technology. In *Area 51 - Black Jets*, author and military historian Bill Yenne offers the first fully illustrated chronology of Area 51's most famous aircraft projects, including Lockheed's U-2 "Dragon Lady" and SR-71 "Blackbird" reconnaissance planes, drones ranging from the early Lockheed D-21 to the modern-day General Atomics MQ-1 Predator, and the famous F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter produced by the Have Blue program during the 1970s. Each project is given its own fascinating chapter illuminating the aircraft's development at this famed location. But beyond the aircraft themselves, *Area 51 - Black Jets* also covers a handful of the many classified experimental programs carried out at Area 51 over the years, such as Have Doughnut, Have Ferry, and Have Drill - secret undertakings that successfully reverse-engineered such enemy aircraft as the Russian MiG during the Cold War. Presented in beautiful hardcover format and illustrated with historic color and black-and-white photographs, diagrams, and maps, this book reveals Area 51 for what it truly is: a clandestine area for the United States' most cutting-edge technological innovators in military aviation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Unlike the breathless treatment given the subject in other mass-market volumes, *Area 51 Black*

Jets provides solid research and real background on the more well-known programs that conducted flights from Groom Lake. Area 51 will continue to be a source of curiosity and fascination that will last as long as any of its secrets, and probably beyond. That being the case, this book makes a great introduction to what little is known of Groom Lake and its history, and may even be an effective reply to the more wild-eyed conspiracy theorists among your friends and family. Area 51 Black Jets is one example of truth being more interesting than fiction." - DefenseMediaNetwork.com

"Unlike the breathless treatment given the subject in other mass-market volumes, Area 51 Black Jets provides solid research and real background on the more well-known programs that conducted flights from Groom Lake. Area 51 Black Jets is one example of truth being more interesting than fiction." - DefenseMediaNetwork.com

"This book is equally suited for the aviation enthusiast as well as the historian. Area 51 Black Jets addresses so many of the seemingly innumerable as well as fantastic aeronautical advancements accomplished there. It is an incredible story told well by Bill Yenne" - SeattlePI.com

"Yenne keeps to the facts and sheds light on the true purpose of the base at Groom Dry Lake, which is testing classified aircraft systems (including aircraft and radar systems obtained from other governments). Lavishly illustrated with photos on every page, most in full color, and many that have not seen the light of day, this is a well-researched volume that is worth adding to your library." - The SR-71 enthusiast website HABU.org

"Gorgeous, authoritative, and indispensable for anyone with an interest in America's favorite secret base." - Coast to Coast AM Radio (Host George Knapp)

"Since the mid-1950s, Area 51 (aka the Nevada Test and Training Range, Homey Airport, and more), a desolate, dry lake bed in the southern Nevada desert, has operated as a clandestine CIA-U.S. Air Force-Lockheed Corporation test site for ongoing cutting-edge research in U.S. flight technology. In July 2013, following a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request filed nearly a decade earlier, the CIA finally acknowledged the existence of Area 51 for the first time by declassifying documents outlining the mandate and history of the base.

Military historian Yenne's (Aces High) insightful study provides an illustrated chronology of many of Area 51's premier aircraft projects, which include Lockheed's U-2 and SR-71 spy planes, a range of drones, from the early Lockheed D-21 to the contemporary Predator, and the F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter. Yenne awards each major program its own chapter showcasing the aircraft's stage-by-stage development. In addition, he previews just a few of the classified special assignments undertaken over time, such as the analysis and covert trial deployment of "acquired" Soviet planes, as well as rumored extraterrestrial projects. VERDICT A comprehensive study, incorporating sound research, vivid prose, colorful illustrations, helpful maps, diagrams, and an indispensable acronym list. Recommended for aviation historians and enthusiasts and those who

are interested in U.S. intelligence, national security, conspiracy theories, and UFOs." "Intriguing history." - Air Force Times "Gorgeous, authoritative, and indispensable for anyone with an interest in America's favorite secret base." - Coast to Coast AM Radio (Host George Knapp) "Even as someone who reads a fair amount about aviation history (though I'm by no means any kind of expert), I found quite a few things in this book I'd never known about before. Area 51 Black Jets is stunningly illustrated. As you look at photos of advanced aircraft or aerial shots of Groom Lake, you can't help but consider that possessing these same photos 20 years ago would have been treasonous, or at least a severe breach of national security. Now you can see F-117s being built, A-12s being pole-tested for their radar signatures, and examine the dry lake, runway and hangars that make up Area 51. If you're an aviation buff, you'll find Area 51 Black Jets a comprehensive history of top secret projects. I find myself thumbing through the pages even after I've read it simply for the photos." - io9.com

Bill Yenne is the author of more than three dozen nonfiction books on historical topics. His books on aviation and military history have included Area 51 Black Jets--which T. D. Barmes, formerly with NASA High Range and Area 51 Special Projects, described as "not a book that the reader will lay down and not finish. It holds one's interest from front to back." Yenne has also contributed to encyclopedias of World War I and World War II and has been featured in several documentaries which have aired on the History Channel, the National Geographic Channel, the Smithsonian Channel, and ARD German Television. The Wall Street Journal notes that Yenne writes "with a cinematic vividness." Yenne has also authored ten novels and has penned several books on beer and brewing history, including Beer: The Ultimate World Tour.

With all of the material that is available today about the "black jets" it seems that much of what Bill and his editors have put together repeats much of the data and the photos that have been seen before. The things that interested me the most were the photos and data he brings out about the location, geography and use of the adjacent sites for things of a nuclear nature. Also, much of the mapping etc., has only been available from more unique sources and Bill has put them all together in one place. The final chapters on some "speculative" items was interesting, and I think seemed to have been written with a little "tongue in cheek" approach. All in all a good buy with much to interest the "black jet" person, but not the "black jet" specialist.

Actually, this book is only a summary of the black airplanes tested at the Groom Lake (and

surrounding areas) north of Las Vegas. So the B2 bomber is acknowledged but not discussed (as it was not tested at that location). Still, the book talked about many planes I had heard something about as well as some that I had not known about. The book also gives some history on the myths behind Area 51. The book does not go into a lot of technical details; so it was a fairly easy read. The book's coverage of black jets seemed quite complete; though in such a secrecy-shrouded environment, who can know for sure? There are also a number of photos. Photos (and maps) don't show up well on the Kindle's e-ink reader (so I had to use the Kindle app to view them on my PC). Also, when I finished reading the book, my Kindle indicated the book was 75% read (as reference materials were the final 25% of the book). Note: As I'd already read Ben Rich's book (Skunk Works), there was some information overlap. I felt Rich's book, being written from a personal viewpoint, was a more interesting read. But both books have something of value for the reader.

Area 51 is often feted by UFO gurus as a secret site for the US government's efforts to reverse-engineer UFO spaceships and research into extraterrestrials. In reality, the most top-secret military base built in the United States has been a testing ground for some American spyplanes and X-planes with potential military applications. Renowned writer Bill Yenne chronicles the history of Area 51 and all the planes that have been flown at the base since the 1950s, from the U-2 Dragon Lady to the Bird of Prey and RQ-170. He also devotes one chapter of this book to MiG fighters that were acquired by the US for evaluation testing at Area 51, and Yenne also discusses the mythical Aurora spyplane and Black Manta tactical spyplane, whose existence was postulated based on anecdotal sightings. For anyone interesting in secret US military aircraft, Area 51: Black Jets is a valuable guide.

I got the Kindle version. Bill's book is about as thorough as you can expect from a site that is the home of exclusively Special Access programs, and has plenty of imagery one wouldn't expect, including photos on the actual flightline there. He makes sure not to wander too far into the Woo, but does briefly address some rumored aircraft like the Aurora.

Okay compendium / summary of the subject. Suitable for folks new to the subject matter. Does not add anything new from what has been available on the web and elsewhere for some years. Basically a small-scale over-priced coffee table book. Nice format & photos but with rehashed info

as textual content. Old stories retold.

Having lived in Las Vegas for over 25 years, I've noted that most of the local and even national and international news stories center around the publicity seeking jerks with their theories of alien beings. These are, as the author pointed out very politely, totally bogus, but are much to the delight of the people in charge of the critical defense programs that do exist. Yenne has taken a ton of now unclassified data and pieced together an interesting story of aerospace history. A great read.

In the 1990's I worked for Raytheon at the DOE's nuclear energy test site in the mountain range north of Las Vegas, NV. We had a nuclear device assembly facility at Area 93, adjacent to Area 51. While we did see U-2's and other aircraft coming and going, all other activities at Area 51 were hidden by the desert mountains. Bill Yenne's book filled in many blank spots from that era of time that I could only guess about. I found the book accurate, interesting, and easy reading. WRM

I love this book, plain and simple. The pictures and text are all first class and it's a worthy addition to my archives. There are many high quality images here that I have not seen elsewhere or published before. When you see the picture of the Aurora refueling behind a KC-135 Stratotanker, you know you are holding something special in your hands,

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