

Danville News Column
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"Revealing Area 51"
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In my 58 years, I have been fortunate to have visited some pretty incredible places in this world. I dove off a boat into the Golfo de Foncesca and swam off a volcanic island. I rode a camel to the base of the Sphinx. I sped a motor scooter in Bermuda. I petted the statue of Greyfriar's Bobby in Edinburgh. I sat on a rock and admired the Grand Canyon. I walked the Acropolis. I donned my Tuxedo, tied my bowtie (I refuse to wear a fake bowtie even if it requires twenty minutes to figure it out) and dined in the Queen Mary 2. I entered Jerusalem through the Mandelbaum Gate. I have seen Ingrid Bergman perform a Chekhov play in London.

If it sounds as if I am bragging, you're exactly right. I have been pretty fortunate. More to the point, I make my own fortune (or misfortune). That's the secret. But, near the top of the places that I gladly brag about having visited is that I have been to Roswell.

I have been to famous Roswell, New Mexico. I just didn't visit Roswell, I even had my photograph taken while wearing aluminum foil on my head at the door of the International Alien Museum. Though, you'd think they would have named it the Intergalactic Alien Museum. International is so limiting.

So, one evening when I listened to an author discuss her new book, titled Area 51, I knew instantly it was a must for my summer reading list. Only after I bought it did I pay attention to the full title: Area 51: An Uncensored History of American's Top Secret Military Base.

Now, we know of course, there is no Area 51. Phone any official government agency and they will inform you that Area 51 doesn't exist. Officially. Three days after my visit to Roswell I did drive near Area 51, but, if the government tells you it isn't there, then I guess that even if you drive by it, Area 51 really isn't there. We have here a mystery as textured as the secret flyer saucer crash near Roswell.

The saucer incident at Roswell is the tease. The author, Annie Jacobsen, begins her book with several pages devoted to the 1947 hush hush crash, then she ends her book with a few surprising pages about what her exhaustive investigations reveal (hint: something about Hitler and his advance air-craft meets a Stalin angry at our boastful and threatening nuclear test at Bikini Atoll who meets Mengele and his medical atrocities), but 99.9% of the book relates incidents far more mysterious, far more complex, and far more nefarious than the fuss and bother about UFO's and aliens. Intergalactic Aliens are the least of our worries when you consider what really took place at the very real Area 51 north of Las Vegas. 99.9% of her research reveals Area 51 as the hub of activities vital to the national interest undertaken by CIA, Air Force, and (the real bad boys) the Atomic Energy Commission. Well, they're called activities vital to the national interest. I guess that depends on who you talk to and which activities.

After World War II, we in the USA competed for superiority against Stalin's Nazi scientists with our own imported Nazi scientists, inventing experimental aircraft, rocketry, nuclear spaceships to Mars, and atomic weaponry involving hundreds of atomic tests. These included dirty bomb tests and a secret atomic blast in space, ripping a hole in the ozone layer. There were the overhead reconnaissance missions (U-2, Oxcart, secret air-bases around the world) and the development of stealth technology (accounting for most of the UFO sightings). As early as the early 1960's we had developed drone aircraft, originally designed for reconnaissance, soon enough used for military strikes and political assassination.

The author alleges one remaining excuse for denying the existence of Area 51: our own USA continuation of what German scientists did with human experimentation at their concentration

camps. A percentage of our US sponsored human experiments were investigated and exposed during Clinton's Presidency, but he soon found there were limits to what the White House could investigate. The White House was denied access to documents because the Presidency lacked sufficient security clearance. He did not have the "need to know." Huh?

We have many national achievements to brag about. We also have national failings to be honest about. Not in superiority are the great great. The great are those who know they are not any better.