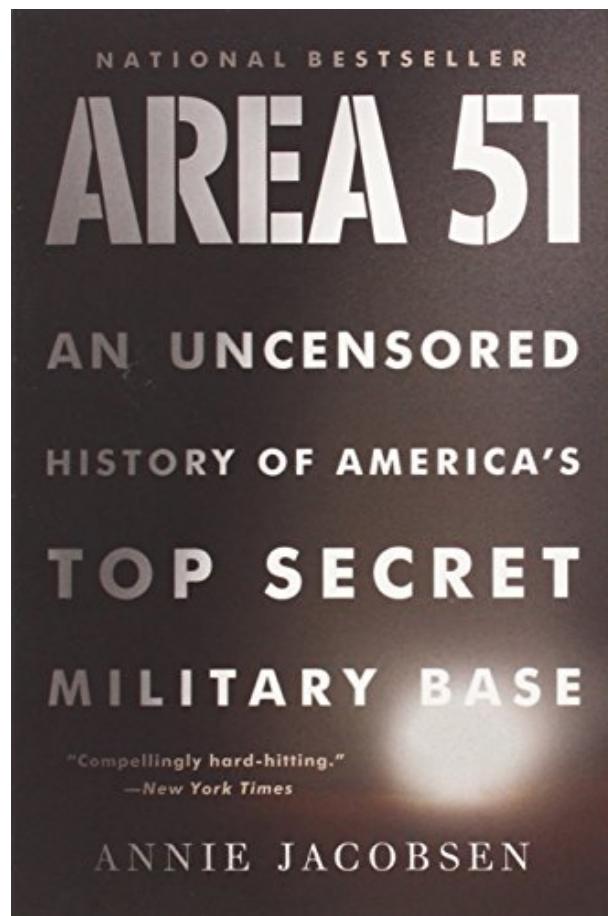


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**BY ANNIE JACOBSEN**



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# AREA 51

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*"Compellingly hard-hitting."*

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## Area 51

It is the most famous military installation in the world. And it doesn't exist. Located a mere seventy-five miles outside of Las Vegas in Nevada's desert, the base has never been acknowledged by the U.S. government—but Area 51 has captivated imaginations for decades.

Myths and hypotheses about Area 51 have long abounded, thanks to the intense secrecy enveloping it. Some claim it is home to aliens, underground tunnel systems, and nuclear facilities. Others believe that the lunar landing itself was filmed there. The prevalence of these rumors stems from the fact that no credible insider has ever divulged the truth about his time inside the base. Until now.

Annie Jacobsen had exclusive access to nineteen men who served the base proudly and secretly for decades and are now aged 75-92, and unprecedented access to fifty-five additional military and intelligence personnel, scientists, pilots, and engineers linked to the secret base, thirty-two of whom lived and worked there for extended periods. In *Area 51*, Jacobsen shows us what has really gone on in the Nevada desert, from testing nuclear weapons to building super-secret, supersonic jets to pursuing the War on Terror.

This is the first book based on interviews with eye witnesses to Area 51 history, which makes it the seminal work on the subject. Filled with formerly classified information that has never been accurately decoded for the public, *Area 51* weaves the mysterious activities of the top-secret base into a gripping narrative, showing that facts are often more fantastic than fiction, especially when the distinction is almost impossible to make.

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793 of 894 people found the following review helpful.

Full of factual errors

By S. Bucki

I'm through the first four chapters of the book and I can already see that the author got an "F" in science. She may be a good reporter and a skilled writer, but she should have the book reviewed by a knowledgeable science consultant before publishing. The mistakes are so obvious that they destroy all credibility.

Here are some examples. On page 21, the author refers to the panic caused by the radio broadcast of the

"War of the Worlds". She mentions that the public was "sensitized" due to recent technological advances, and she cites the jet engine, the radar and the microwave oven. None of these devices were known to the general public in 1938. Experimental jet engines were being developed in the UK and Germany, but were virtually unheard of in the USA. Radar was also in an experimental phase, and shrouded by a great deal of secrecy because of its military potential. The secrecy was so great that even the German military was not aware about the progress made in the field in the USA and UK, let alone general public. Finally, the heating effect of microwaves was not discovered until 1945.

Then on page 29 the author says that the nuclear blast travels at 100 mph. As with any explosion, the shockwave travels at the speed of sound (approx. 700 mph).

On page 33 she refers to Peenemunde as the fabrication site for German V2 rockets. V2 was produced at Mittelwerk in the Kohnstein. The initial production line built at Peenemunde was destroyed in a RAF bombing raid. Peenemunde was the test site for V2 rockets, not a production site.

On page 34, the author refers to V2 as a "winged missile". V1 was the winged missile (a precursor of today's cruise missiles), while the V2 was a ballistic missile without wings, only small control surfaces in the tail.

And all these in the first 30 or so pages of the book...

Now, regarding the mysterious Soviet "flying saucer". There is absolutely no evidence that the Soviets had the technology to build a compact aircraft capable of flying at 1200 mph, intercontinental range, hovering capability, and stealthy in 1947. In fact, nobody is capable of building such an aircraft today. If such an aircraft was ever developed over 60 years ago, some information would have leaked out by now. Moreover, if the Soviets had such technology, why didn't they use it to improve the performance of their military aircraft during the Cold War armament race?

327 of 367 people found the following review helpful.

Stolen Valor by T. D. Barnes - a source for the book

By Bob977

From: [td-barnes.com/blog/?p=105](http://td-barnes.com/blog/?p=105) "Stolen Valor" By one of Jacobsen's sources:

Today is Memorial Day 2011, a day for remembering the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform. For many of us who listened to Coast-to-Coast radio last night, it is a day that we Roadrunners of Groom Lake, a.k.a. Area 51 realize that our valor has been stolen by an author who refuses to repent her literary crimes and errors described herein.

Many members of our Roadrunner association fought in World War II, Korea, Viet Nam, and the Cold War. For years on end, we worked in secrecy, leaving our homes on Monday morning and returning on Friday night, unable for almost half a century to tell our families where we'd been or what we did. Over the past few years the Roadrunners nudged the edge of the security envelope as we sought to establish the legacy of our proud U-2 Aquatone and A-12 Oxcart sacrifices and contributions to our nation's security and survival of the Cold War. In 2007, the CIA declassified our identities in the projects, which enabled us to publish our individual participation for the benefit of history, family, and friends. We circled the wagons and as a band of brothers told our stories and contributed to stories establishing the legacy of those already departed on their final flight. For this their families and friends were very grateful.

Approximately two years ago, Annie Jacobsen, an established author and contributing editor for the LA Times wrote an excellent article entitled The Road to Area 51, which described the beginning of our Project

Oxcart. Because of the success of the article, Mrs. Jacobsen undertook to author a book about the projects and Roadrunner participants, which we embraced with open arms. We saw it as a great means of passing our stories and proud legacy on to our families, friends, and future generations.

We took Mrs. Jacobsen into our homes and told her our life history that led to our being proud participants in the ultra secret activities at Area 51. We introduced her to our contemporaries, something that most of us had never done before. After 50 years of silence, we sought to allow our brothers the opportunity to finally tell about the major contributions recently declassified that we, as a band of brothers, made to our nations wars. In a domino like effect, each of us opened the doors of others who took our lead in the telling of their personal sacrifices and contributions to past wars, including the Cold War, and to our nations future wars to keep us free.

When we organized the Oxcart Legacy Tour in September 2010, where we spent ten days in the Washington area conducting panel discussions at various intelligence agencies, the Air & Space Smithsonian Museum, the International Spy Museum, and the Capitol Hill Club, we brought Annie Jacobsen along as a friend and author writing our stories. Out of respect to us, these agencies allowed Annie Jacobsen to accompany us to these presentations conducted deep in the inner sanctums of agencies normally closed to those lacking security clearances and a need to know.

Unknown to us, the author, to whom we were telling our life histories, somewhere along the way became an Investigative Journalist credulously seeking to associate our time at Area 51 with the so-called Roswell flying saucer crash in 1947. Unknown to us, she located an elderly former employee of the Atomic Energy Commission whose mind now recalls seeing a Russian-made flying saucer constructed by Stalin that reportedly crashed at Roswell packed with medically and genetically altered children as pilots. According to Jacobsen writing in first person and stating as facts, Nazi Dr. Josef Mengele worked with Stalin to create these alien-looking children and this unidentified witness, a nuclear engineer, was given the job of caring for the comatose child pilots encased in vertical tubular tanks filled with Jell-O-like substance and life support systems. Why, if Russia having this technology in 1947, we arent all speaking the Russian language today, or why a nuclear engineer would be called upon to medically care for comatose children encased in Jell-O-like substance is totally lacking in Jacobsens book. However, on the basis of the sole-source stories of an elderly, unidentified witness, Jacobsen and her publisher completely changed the focus of her book from one of heroics to one of horror and fantasy. When presented with discrepancies in her book and on her website promoting the book, Jacobsen refused to correct them, stating she stands by what she was told or wrote. The following discrepancies on the website could have been corrected, but were not: Bud Wheelon only went up in the trainer, its misleading to say he flew in a Mach 3 spy plane. Bissell resigned in 1961 and Wheelon didnt become DDS&T until 1963, thus it is misleading to connect the two events. Herbert Scoville, the Deputy Director for Research (appointed in 1962 to the position that preceded the establishment of the DS&T) would have been Bissells replacement as Mayor of Area 51h. (A term not officially used to describe the position.) Referencing the JFK assassination in the Donohue character description is off the mark; it had no effect on the program.

Nonetheless, Jacobsenfs book, Area 51 an uncensored history of Americas Top Secret Military Base has excited those who subscribe to activism, scandal, conspiracy, Nazi and Stalin atrocities, and child mutilation, and is racing towards being a number one seller. The scandal is not the veterans, named and unnamed, whom the public now affiliates to the wild, unsubstantiated gory facts contained in the last chapter of the book where Jacobsen ventures into writing as an activist in the first person. The scandal is Jacobsen who is fending off international condemnation by the media, fellow journalists, and the veterans of Nevadas atomic programs and DOD operations at Area 51 by now claiming that as a reporter it was her duty to report what she was told and that it was not her job to verify the truth. Instead of enjoying a great book that the DOD and

DOE families can be proud of and share with their families, the aging Roadrunners are having to show up at Jacobsens book signings, not to promote her book, but to set the record straight and clear their names and legacy. However, take away the final chapter, Area 51 An Uncensored History Of Americas Top Secret Military Base is certainly one that should be read to learn a bit about the secret heroes of the Cold War.

T.D. BARNES  
President Roadrunners Internationale

594 of 676 people found the following review helpful.

UPDATE Embellishing author strikes again with factual errors and speculation passed off as truth  
By ReedGeo

Finished the book, and I did not care for it for a few main reasons. I cannot believe how much attention this is getting. The parts about the U2 and A12/SR71 were for the most part pretty good, but much had been already written there.

For an article showing her previous embellishment see this. She has a history of misrepresenting things. They won't let me post a link but look on Snopes and search for Annie Jacobsen. You will see how she operates.

The first sign that there were issues was in her own article promoting the book. She wrote in an article shortly before the book came out this statement: "one of the NERVA tests, which allowed a Mars-bound nuclear rocket to overheat to 4,000+ degrees Celsius until it burst, sending radioactive chunks as large as 148 pounds into the atmosphere". Do a search for this phrase and you can find the article on the web. This statement is completely false. The really annoying thing is her book doesn't even say this. She is much closer to the truth in the book itself that a reactor (not a rocket) was detonated on the ground as part of a planned test. They never launched a mars-bound rocket from the NTS and she knew this but willingly exaggerated in her promotional article. I have a problem with an author who can't even reference HER OWN MATERIAL accurately. What does that say about the rest of the book?

Overall the three major flaws with this book are as follows:

1. She talked a lot about the Nevada Test Site and clearly had not done much research on it as many statements were factually wrong. She greatly exaggerates the nuclear rocket test stories and Project 57 and makes them sound far worse than they are. There are documents available to the public that show exactly what went on with both of these and she even sourced a few but chose to rely on bar stories instead to discount official accurate records. She had a horrible map drawn up in the front of the book when she could have gotten a better one anywhere.
2. Which brings me to the next major flaw. She relied too much on stories from people that were not verifiable, even when her notes show she had better sources to use for much of the information. Several of the notes, when followed to the back of the book are attributed to "defensible speculation" based on her unnamed source.
3. She totally lost all credibility when she presented as fact the whole Roswell was a Russian craft and the aliens were created by Mengele theory. All of it was presented as fact and credited to only an interview with an anonymous EG&G engineer. She started and finished the book with this ridiculous theory that UFO researchers and non believers would each find silly. The focus on this tainted the whole book in my opinion. I believe she thought she had found the Deep Throat of Roswell when really either it was someone pulling her leg, or someone deliberately trying to discredit her to make the rest of the book suspect. However, I

could have set that aside if there were not so many other issues in the book.

UPDATE: I have seen a few interviews and she said she has full trust in her "source" and he fully believes what he "was told". So her source isn't even a first hand source. He just dropped another into level of unreliability. Yet she is willing to discount 60 years of research and history in favor of his story.

So let's get into specifics. On top of the Roswell garbage she presents, she has so many trivial yet easily recognizable facts incorrect that it also tainted the whole book. For example:

She states that the US got V-2 rockets from Pennemunde, this is not true as the Soviets captured that base. The V-2s we got were from plants in western Germany.

In chapter 6 she states that the Nevada Test Site encompassed 1,350 acres and she repeated that on NPR. Well I don't know how an editor let that go by since that's only TWO SQUARE MILES. 1350 square miles is the correct statement.

She says the first atomic bomb exploded on US soil was at the NTS in 1951. What about the Trinity test in New Mexico in 1945?

She seems to want to equate a "safety test" or a nuclear reactor test with a nuclear explosion. They are not the same. Testing a nuclear-powered reactor would not be a violation of the test ban treaty.

Area 51 was not named such because it was in 1951. This of course is from her suspicious source. Most sources say it began in 1955 but the NTS areas were all parceled out in 1950 and it could have been done then. Either way the areas there do not have any relation to years.

She states that Czar Nicholas was shot in 1918, setting off the Russian Revolution. The Revolution was well under way by 1918.

She rants about why the DOE would change their name 4 times in 60 years if there was nothing to hide, instead of understanding that the mission of the Manhattan Project - AEC - DOE has changed over the years and the name was changed to reflect that. She says the FBI only changed their name once. Well pretty much it has been a federal bureau that has performed investigations since it started. She seemed to be trying to make everything more sinister than it really was.

Just a few little errors but they point to faulty research overall which makes anything else in the book suspect.

To be fair the parts on the U2, SR-71 and some other aircraft testing and some of the cold war spy flight stories were interesting (two stars worth only) but not enough to make up for the ridiculous Roswell theory the book starts and ends with and they are even tainted with some doubt because of the other errors and overly dramatic storytelling.

The story of Area 51 and the Nevada Test Site are fascinating enough without embellishment and relying on bar stories. If you want a good Area 51 book get *Dreamland* by Phil Patton. It is based on facts and when speculation is made, he clearly states that.

For all you who give this 5 stars for who knows why please do some of your own research. You can easily find better information on the Nevada Test Site, the nuclear rocket program, Project 57, etc than you will get

from this book. If you want a history of Area 51, get Dreamland, if you want spy plane stories, get "By Any Means Necessary" by Burrows, for nuclear rocket stuff get Dewar's "To The End Of The Solar System".

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