

Nevada Test Site

Atmospheric Tests at the Nevada
Test Site, 1951 - 1962

March 2001



Military Personnel observe one of the test in the Buster-Jangle Series in the Fall of 1951.

Introduction

Events leading up to the establishment of the Nevada Test Site began at 5:30 a.m. on July 16, 1945, when the United States exploded *Trinity* – the world's first atomic bomb at White Sands near Alamogordo, New Mexico. In January 1946, the government selected Bikini Atoll as its Pacific Proving Ground for an ongoing testing program. While tests were being conducted in the South Pacific, pressure was building for a test site within the continental United States. The first Soviet Union test on August 29, 1949, followed by the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, increased concern about the

ability of the U.S. to maintain strict security at the off-continent site. At the same time, logistics to support the Pacific Proving Ground were becoming increasingly complex and expensive. After extensive studies, the Atomic Energy Commission selected the Nevada Proving Grounds as the most suitable on-continent site.

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On-continent Test Site Established

In December 1950, President Harry S. Truman announced the establishment of the Nevada Proving Grounds -- forerunner of the Nevada Test Site -- as the nation's on-continent nuclear weapons testing area. Construction began on January 1, 1951. The original Nevada test area was about half its present size. Additional land was acquired over the years until 1965 when the test site reached its present size of about 1,375 square miles -- a restricted area larger than the state of Rhode Island.

The first nuclear test at the Nevada Proving Grounds was detonated on January 27, 1951. Named *Able*, the nuclear device with a yield of 1,000 tons (1 kiloton) of TNT, was dropped from a B-50 bomber over Frenchman Flat in the southeast corner of the test site.

During the next 11 years, 100 atmospheric tests would be conducted at the Nevada Test Site. Nuclear devices were dropped from planes, shot as rockets, detonated on the surface, shot from a cannon, placed on top of towers, and suspended from balloons. The tests were designed to develop new weapons, design new safety features, and to learn more about the effects of nuclear explosions on civilian and military structures.

Atmospheric testing at the Nevada Test Site and in the South Pacific ended when the United States and the Soviet Union signed the *Limited Test Ban Treaty* in Moscow on August 5, 1963. That agreement prohibited nuclear weapons testing in outer space, underwater, and in the atmosphere.

Location and Dates of Tests

Area 1

<i>Easy</i>	05/07/1952
<i>Simon</i>	04/25/1953
<i>HA</i>	04/06/1955
<i>Apple 2</i>	05/05/1955
<i>Galileo</i>	09/02/1957

Area 2

<i>How</i>	06/05/1952
<i>Badger</i>	04/18/1953
<i>Turk</i>	03/07/1955
<i>Diablo</i>	07/15/1957
<i>Shasta</i>	08/18/1957
<i>Smoky</i>	08/31/1957
<i>Whitney</i>	09/23/1957

Area 3

<i>George</i>	06/01/1952
<i>Annie</i>	03/17/1953
<i>Harry</i>	05/19/1953
<i>Moth</i>	02/22/1955
<i>Hornet</i>	03/12/1955
<i>Franklin</i>	06/02/1957
<i>Coulomb-A</i>	07/01/1957
<i>Coulomb-B</i>	09/06/1957
<i>Fizeau</i>	09/14/1957

<i>Rio Arriba</i>	10/18/1958	<i>Bee</i>	03/22/1955
<i>Catron</i>	10/24/1958	<i>Wasp Prime</i>	03/29/1955
<i>Chavez</i>	10/27/1958	<i>Zucchini</i>	05/15/1955
<i>Humboldt</i>	10/29/1958	<i>Boltzmann</i>	05/28/1957
<i>Coulomb-C</i>	12/09/1957	<i>Stokes</i>	08/07/1957
<u>Area 4</u>		<i>Doppler</i>	08/23/1957
<i>Fox</i>	05/25/1952	<i>Franklin-Prime</i>	08/30/1957
<i>Nancy</i>	03/24/1953	<i>Laplace</i>	09/08/1957
<i>Ray</i>	04/11/1953	<i>Newton</i>	09/16/1957
<i>Apple 1</i>	03/29/1955	<i>Hidalgo</i>	10/05/1958
<i>Kepler</i>	07/24/1957	<i>Dona Ana</i>	10/16/1958
		<i>Socorro</i>	10/22/1958
<u>Area 5</u>		<i>De Baca</i>	10/26/1958
<i>Able (First test at NTS)</i>	01/27/1951	<i>Santa Fe</i>	10/30/1958
<i>Baker</i>	01/28/1951	<i>Eddy</i>	09/19/1958
<i>Easy</i>	02/01/1951		
<i>Baker-2</i>	02/02/1951	<u>Area 8</u>	
<i>Fox</i>	02/06/1951	<i>Oberon</i>	10/22/1958
<i>Able</i>	04/01/1952	<i>Titania</i>	10/30/1958
<i>Encore</i>	05/08/1953	<i>Ceres</i>	10/26/1958
<i>Grable</i>	05/25/1953		
<i>MET</i>	04/15/1955	<u>Area 9</u>	
<i>Priscilla</i>	06/24/1957	<i>Sugar</i>	11/19/1951
<i>Hamilton</i>	10/15/1958	<i>Tesla</i>	03/01/1955
<i>Wrangell</i>	10/22/1958	<i>Post</i>	04/09/1955
<i>Sandford</i>	10/26/1958	<i>Wilson</i>	06/18/1957
<i>Small Boy</i>	07/14/1961	<i>Hood</i>	07/05/1957
		<i>Owens</i>	07/25/1957
<u>Area 7</u>		<i>Wheeler</i>	09/06/1957
<i>Able</i>	10/22/1951	<i>Charleston</i>	09/28/1957
<i>Baker</i>	10/28/1951	<i>Morgan</i>	10/07/1957
<i>Charlie</i>	10/30/1951	<i>Vesta</i>	10/17/1958
<i>Dog</i>	11/01/1951	<i>Rushmore</i>	10/22/1958
<i>Easy</i>	11/05/1951	<i>Juno</i>	10/24/1958
<i>Baker</i>	04/15/1952	<i>Mazama</i>	10/29/1958
<i>Charlie</i>	04/22/1952	<i>Ganymede</i>	10/30/1958
<i>Dog</i>	05/01/1952	<i>Lassen</i>	06/05/1959
<i>Ruth</i>	03/31/1953		
<i>Dixie</i>	04/06/1953	<u>Area 11</u>	
<i>Lea</i>	10/13/1958	<i>Project 56 No 1</i>	11/01/1955
<i>Quay</i>	10/10/1958	<i>Project 56 No.2</i>	11/03/1955
<i>Mora</i>	09/29/1958	<i>Project 56 No.3</i>	11/05/1955
<i>Climax</i>	06/04/1953	<i>Project 56 No.4</i>	01/18/1956
<i>Wasp</i>	02/18/1955		

Area 18

<i>Little Feller II</i>	07/07/1962
<i>Johnnie Boy</i>	07/11/1962
<i>Little Feller I (Last test)</i>	07/17/1962

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**DOE/NV-716
MARCH 2001**