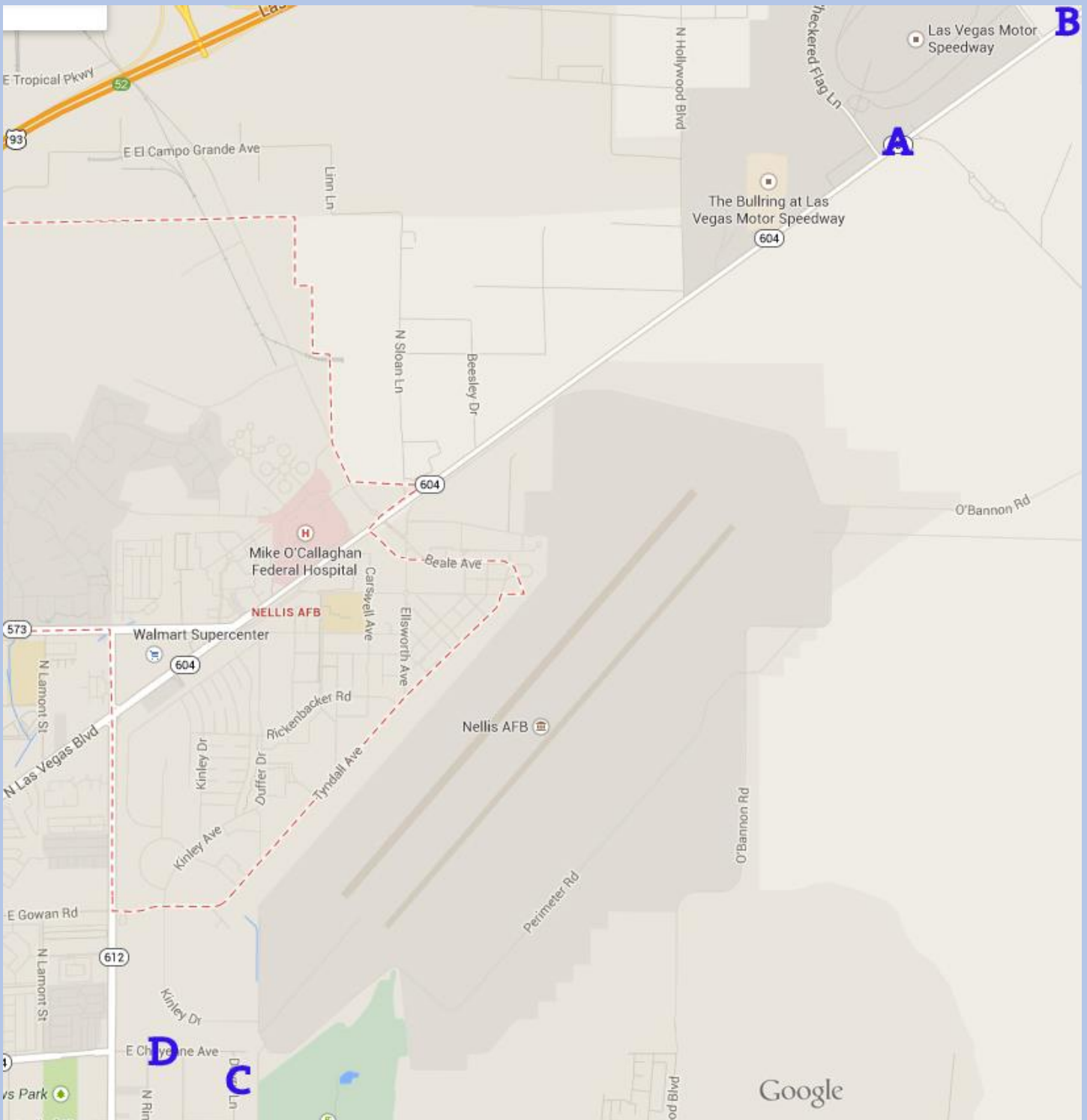


# Nellis Air Force Base

## Aircraft Observation Guide



Nellis Air Force Base, located near Las Vegas, Nevada USA, is home to military exercises such as Red Flag, Green Flag and JFEX. Nellis AFB can be a very busy base with multiple squadrons (including the USAF Thunderbirds) based there, flying aircraft such as: F-16's, F-15's, F-22, F-35's, A-10's and HH-60's. Generally,

base security and local law enforcement tolerate observers and photographers provided the boundaries of the base are respected.

For photography, while the volume of activity is typically good (especially during exercises), there can be several challenges while photographing off-base. For example, when photographing from the Las Vegas Speedway, the light is not ideal until the late afternoon. Also, you need a lot a reach with your glass. From the Speedway, arrivals on 21R require at least 400mm and arrivals on 21L require at least 800mm. Arrivals on the 03's require less reach, but you have more obstacles to contend with (poles, buildings, wires, etc...). Departures on the 03's are difficult to shoot due to the distance and height of the aircraft when they depart this route. The best option is to anticipate some FLEX departures and photograph the aircraft when they are banking. For departures on the 21's, 300mm plus reach is needed. Another challenge in photographing off-base at Nellis is frequent runway changes. Runways change often and do not necessarily go against the wind direction like you would expect. You may even have occasions where departures are on 03L and arrivals are on 21L. A scanner radio is recommended to keep up with the changes. For Red Flag, launches are typically on runway 03 and recoveries are typically on runway 21.

**LV Speedway Gate(s) 4/5 (Location A) [GPS 36.266213, -115.010739]** – This is an ideal location for afternoon recoveries on 21R (21L recoveries will require a lot of reach). The goal here is to catch the aircraft banking into the final turn into base. Plan on a lot of moving around depending on how the aircraft come in. Navy aircraft turn very tight so you will need to be towards gate 3 for them, while other aircraft may turn more towards gate 5 or 6. There is plenty of space to park your vehicle in the dirt area on the side of the road here. Plan on getting a lot of exercise. You can also photograph 03 departures from here but they are often too high and distant from this location.

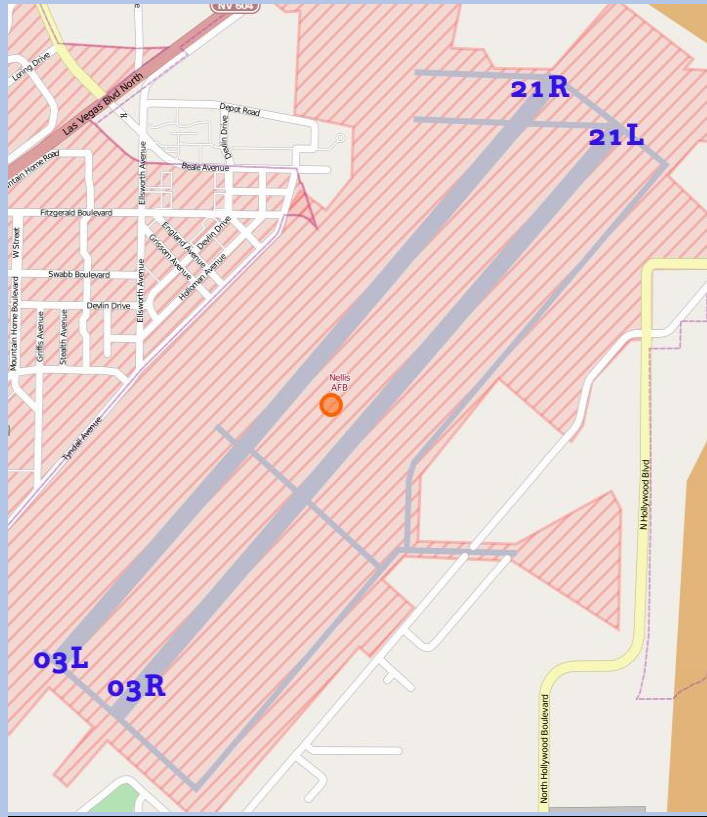
**LV Speedway Gate(s) 8/9 (Location B) [GPS 36.273622, -114.998096]** – This location is good FLEX departures on 03L. Since the locations to get a decent look at runway 03 departures are limited, it's typically a good idea to try to catch a few aircraft turning out or flexing from this location. The aggressor aircraft FLEX often, but I have been at this location when 2/3's of the aircraft FLEX. If the aircraft are departing from 03L, there is a decent chance they make FLEX. This is where a scanner radio can come in handy because the pilots often discuss the type of departure with the tower. The elevation at this location is slightly higher and, due to the angle of the runway, you can be closer to the aircraft.

**Cheyenne & Kinley (Location C) [GPS 36.217968, -115.052864]** – This is a good early morning location. Arrivals on runway 03R are decent from this location and do not need much reach. AM departures from 21L can be good here but the aircraft typically turn away from you.

**Cheyenne (Location D) [GPS 36.218257, -115.059711]** – This location can be good for runway 21 departures and 03 arrivals in the afternoon. There are many locations on and around Cheyenne for you to position yourself for the photographing the aircraft. This is all dependent on factors such as which runway is in use, how the aircraft are turning into base, the position of the sun, etc... The best advice here is “when in Rome”. Keep an eye on what the other photographers, especially the locals, are doing until you get a “feel” for the positioning in this neighborhood. For example, Nellis Meadows Park [GPS 36.217501, -115.065748] can be an interesting location for afternoon recoveries on runway 03L. Most of the Cheyenne-based locations do not require as much lens reach as the LV Speedway, but there are more obstacles to deal with (poles, wires, etc...).

*\*\*\*It is recommended that a scanner radio be used to monitor the traffic in and out of the base and identify runway use\*\*\**

## Runway Configuration



## Scanner Frequencies

Frequency	Alpha Tag	Description
270.10000	ATIS	ATIS
132.55000	Tower VHF	Tower
327.00000	Nellis Tower	Nellis Tower UHF
120.90000	ClearanceVHF	Clearance
289.40000	ClearanceUHF	Clearance
118.12500	ApproachVHF	Approach
291.72500	ApproachUHF	Approach
135.10000	DepartureVHF	Departure
385.40000	DepartureUHF	Departure

## Disclaimer

\*\*\* The creator and/or distributor of this document makes no claim as to the legality of observing and/or photographing aircraft at the locations specified in this document. It is expected that private property is off-limits, as well as, any locations designated as such (ex- no parking/standing zones). At times, observing/photographing aircraft can be a sensitive security issue. In any case, one should always be prepared to be confronted by law enforcement/airport or base security and be respectful at all times. While one can argue on whether aircraft observation at airports and military installations is a right or privilege, during these security-sensitive times in the U.S., I prefer to look at it as a privilege and act accordingly.\*\*\*

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