



# Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases

SPECIAL EDITION: 4 July 2010

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## **INDEPENDENCE FROM AMERICA DEMONSTRATION**

**AT THE AMERICAN BASE AT MENWITH HILL HG3 2RP  
WELCOME TO BEAUTIFUL NIDDERDALE!**

*Dear friends*

We thought it might be helpful if we published this Special Edition containing some brief and basic information about Menwith Hill specifically, and US bases generally. The information we give (*which is just a snippet!*) is all credibly researched and confirmed. Information is gathered by CAAB from a number of sources: regular Parliamentary Questions, articles, research, 'moles', academics, media, friends of CAAB, etc. If anyone would like the references please let us know.

### **BRIEF HISTORY OF MENWITH HILL**

Menwith Hill is a US base and is apparently celebrating 50 years this year. We are told by David Elliott (newly appointed Squadron

Leader/RAF Liaison Officer) that Menwith Hill is marking the anniversary from when the base became operational on 15 September 1960. He says the land was compulsorily purchased by the MOD (War Office) in 1954 and access and right to use the land was given in 1955. This was decided by a few people behind closed doors and never debated in Parliament. Construction started in 1956.

A book, which will be available to the public, is to be published to celebrate 50 years ... of the US Visiting Forces and their Agencies in occupation and control of the base! According to a column written by Angela Marquis (Public Affairs) in the *Harrogate Advertiser* – 11 June 2010: "A pub quiz gets base's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations under way" – celebrations will go on throughout the year.

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The base is run by the National Security Agency of America. In 2004 the base was taken over by the US Air Force. “We received word from Gen. Hayden at the

NSA that MHS needed to follow the ‘one base one boss’ philosophy” said Colonel Roberts (US Commander at the time). The National Reconnaissance Office is also present at Menwith Hill.

The land is in the possession of the UK Secretary of State for Defence. All the buildings and facilities at Menwith Hill (as with all US bases) are owned and paid for by the US.

The US Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines are present at the base. There is a significant development going on at present (Project Phoenix).

**HOW MANY PEOPLE WORK AT MENWITH HILL?**

Hansard: the following personnel were employed at RAF Menwith Hill: (asked by Colin Challen for CAAB – answered by Bob Ainsworth 3 March 2009).

<b>Employer</b>	<b>Number</b>
US Service Personnel	540
US Civilians and Contractors	892
RAF Personnel	4
UK Army Personnel	0
UK Naval Personnel	8
UK Contractors	76 <sup>1</sup>
UK Civilians (Excl MDPGA)	325
US Military Chaplains	2
UK Military Chaplains	0

<sup>1</sup> *The number of UK contractors’ personnel working at RAF Menwith Hill may vary on a day-to-day basis.*

I am withholding the number of GCHQ employees in accordance with Government

practice not to reveal numbers of personnel working in intelligence at specific locations. I am also withholding the numbers for both the Ministry of Defence Police, and the Ministry of Defence Guard Agency for the purpose of the proper enforcement of law, and in the interests of national defence. [9 Mar 2009: Column 177W]

Figures given by David Elliott (RAF Liaison Officer) on 24 June 2010: US personnel – not including ‘dependents’ living on base: 1361 – UK personnel: 779 Total: 2140 [note also various personnel not revealed in PQ e.g. GCHQ and Ministry of Defence Police Agency].

**WHAT DOES MENWITH DO?**

Menwith Hill is the largest intelligence-gathering and surveillance base outside the US. It has a diplomatic, military and economic role – being the hub of the ECHELON system. It can and does tap into any airborne communication – fax, telephone, emails. The base plays a crucial role in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (possible conflict against Iran) and won an award in the first Gulf War (1990) for its role. It is unaccountable, secretive and out of control of the UK Government. Ostensibly the Intelligence Security Committee (ISC) keeps an eye on Menwith Hill. However the ISC are not told everything and have restricted access to the Operations Area. The US authorities decide how much to reveal. MPs can visit but this is usually on a social level. They are not party to the inner workings of Menwith Hill. Access has been denied to some MPs.

In 1997 CAAB was the first campaign to discover and reveal that Menwith Hill (and later RAF Fylingdales) was to be crucially connected to the US Missile Defence system. Two radomes were eventually built as part of the Space Based Infra Red System – see story of the legal action brought by CAAB in the High Court London to stop the building of the radomes. Missile Defence is an offensive system and is about US domination of space – for US military and economic interests only. Read the story of the legal action brought by CAAB: [www.caab.org.uk](http://www.caab.org.uk)

**WHO IS IN CHARGE AT MENWITH HILL?**

- Although all US bases are referred to as ‘RAF’ this is far from the truth. US bases are occupied and controlled by the US authorities.

- The US Commander is in charge. Mary O'Brien (Colonel) is the present Commander – to be replaced in mid-July by Michelle Clays (Colonel).
- Menwith Hill became an 'RAF' base in 1995 – ostensibly in line with other RAF bases and to coincide with the repealed Military Land byelaws. The second set of MLBs are invalid as they are not used. The notices continue to be displayed.
- There is an RAF Liaison Officer. There are a very small number of RAF personnel working at Menwith Hill. David Elliot (Squadron Leader) acts as the RAF Liaison Officer.
- There are no leases on US bases. There was a 'security of tenure agreement' however at Menwith Hill – renewed every 21 years. CAAB has some interesting 'secret' letters and documents which give the history of the renewal each year (often given by a secretary). These were disclosed in a High Court case in 1993 involving CAAB.

## THE ROLE AND PRESENCE OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE AGENCY - MDPA

The MDPA is a British police force working on UK bases and some US bases who are very different to the Home Office police force. One difference being that, unlike the Home Office police force, they are not accountable to an elected body (Police Authority). Security is overseen by the US security personnel. The MDPA are paid for and under the operation control of the US authorities on US bases. On some US bases there are no MDPA present. They are under threat from inevitable cuts by the coalition Government. There is no recruitment at the moment. Roger Phillips is the senior officer (MDPA Superintendent) at present.

## US BASES

There are approximately 6,000 bases in the US and nearly 1,000 worldwide – and growing. Threats to the US are perceived to have moved from Europe to SE Asia. There are about 12 US bases in England where the US authorities are in control and occupation. The US authorities are present on some RAF bases, e.g. the UK Defence Intelligence and

Security Centre at Chicksands and the HQ of the Intelligence Corps (handed back to the MOD by the US authorities in 1995).

The American people are unaware of the extent of the US empire and how much the bases cost. The 'host' nation bears the cost of the environmental damage left by the United States Visiting Forces and their Agencies.

The Visiting Forces Act (1952) and the Status of Forces Agreement (1951) loosely define the legal justification of the USVF. Cosy arrangements through Memoranda of Understanding are made between the US and UK government without public debate or scrutiny.

### A FEW USEFUL WEBSITES:

**Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases – CAAB:** contains comprehensive information (articles, videos, news items, opinions etc etc) around issues of US bases and the presence of the US Visiting Forces here and worldwide:  
[www.caab.org.uk](http://www.caab.org.uk)

**The Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy:** independent, not-for-profit research and advocacy organisation working on disarmament, arms control:  
[www.acronym.org.uk](http://www.acronym.org.uk)

**Global Security:** reliable news and security information - directed by John Pike:  
[www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org)

**Secret Bases:**  
[www.secret-bases.co.uk/secret4.htm](http://www.secret-bases.co.uk/secret4.htm)  
(contains comprehensive information on US bases and UK bases – not always referenced)

**Global Network Against Weapons and Power in Space:** comprehensive website containing, among other things information about space technology/Missile Defence  
[www.space4peace.org](http://www.space4peace.org)

**Union of Concerned Scientists:** based in the US – leading science-based non-profit organisation working for a healthy environment and a safer world:  
[www.ucsusa.org](http://www.ucsusa.org)



## FINALLY ... SO WHO and WHAT IS CAAB?

We are a small group of people with many supporters. We are grounded in non-violent ways of working. We rely entirely on voluntary contributions. CAAB evolved in 1992 out of the long campaign of protest at Menwith Hill – protest which has been going on since the 1950s. We aim to bring public scrutiny and awareness as to the presence, roles and functions of the US Visiting Forces here and world wide. We work in many different ways. What we have achieved and how we work can be found on either the CAAB leaflet and/or the website.

**Co-ordinators:** Lindis Percy and Laila Packer  
**Hon Treasurer:** Christine Dean  
**Monitor of Planning offices at Menwith Hill and Fylingdales:** Steve Hill  
**Webmaster:** Ray Middleton  
**CAAB Chef:** Rob Packer

## WHO SAID WHAT ABOUT CAAB –

(adjournment debate on the US Missile Defence system in the House of Lords by Sue Miller [Baroness Miller of Chilthorne -10 Jan 2008: Column 969])

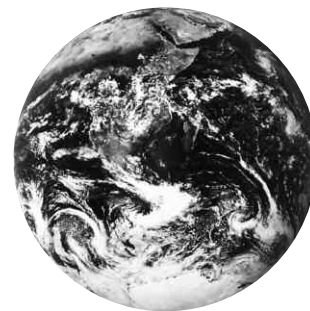
*... Before I close, I also want to pay tribute to the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases. It operates in Yorkshire near Menwith Hill. It has been the eyes and ears of the public for what is happening there; it first revealed in 1997 that Menwith Hill was to be designated as the European ground relay station. It has continued to raise this issue ever since. Its members have suffered an awful lot of personal aggravation, and I ask the Minister to look into some of the history of this. They have been arrested but not charged, and charged but the charges have been dropped; they would have welcomed those charges being pursued so that they could have had their day in court. In one case, violence was used against a member, and no satisfactory explanation has ever been given for that. However, it has been incredibly important that people on the ground have been there to see what is happening with planning permissions and some of the issues raised by the noble Lord, Lord Judd.*

*I wish them well in their campaign. They regularly campaign on Tuesdays outside Menwith Hill to draw attention to the unaccountability of this American base on British soil ...*

Please come to the weekly demonstration on Tuesday evening (6.00–8.00pm) – we are now into the tenth year (and it's time they went!) – join in the campaign.

**A message from CAAB  
to the US Visiting  
Forces and their  
Agencies:  
GO BACK TO  
YOUR BORDERS  
PLEASE!**

*Thank you everyone involved with CAAB over the years and to everyone who made the Annual Independence FROM America demonstration on 4 July 2010 possible.*



## Meeting for Worship:

Continue outside various US bases – contact CAAB for details

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**Please note new E-mail:** mail@caab.corner.org.uk

**Website:** <http://www.caab.org.uk>



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