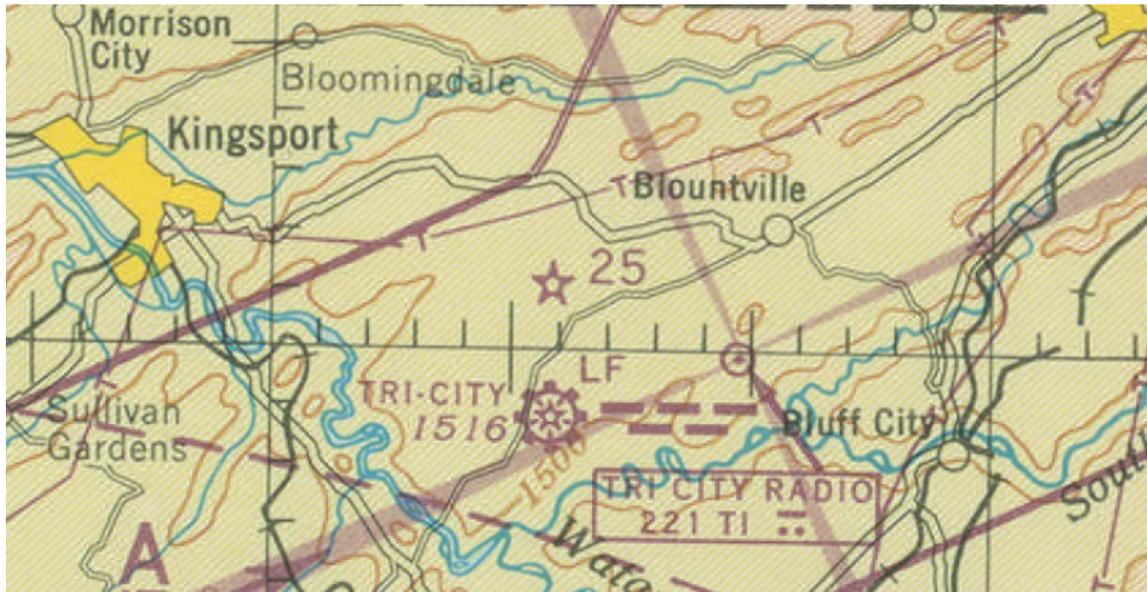


Beacon 25

For several months I have been looking for the location of Tennessee Beacon 25, a lighted airway beacon on the Washington D.C.-Memphis route. I had coordinates taken from the 1945 Winston-Salam sectional chart so the location was approximately within a one square mile area. Examination of topo. maps and aerial photos didn't help and for a while I was afraid the beacon may have been destroyed during the building of the nearby I-81.

Tennessee has a very good online GIS system of land ownership. I looked for a farm that might have been around when the Beacon was active. The first land parcel I selected was a hit. I called the number for the Osborne family near Blountville, which is south of Bristol and talked to Mrs. Osborne. She knew exactly what I was interested in and when I explained my quest she stopped me and said, "Oh yes that is the light that used to be on the hill behind my sister's house." I asked if I could come by sometime and look for evidence of its location. She agreed and said stop by anytime.



A portion of the 1945 Winston-Salam sectional chart showing the location of Beacon 25 north of the Tri-city airport.

I was in Bristol late in November of 2012 and called her to arrange a visit. She said she would be looking for me. Her home and the beacon site are off of Shipley Ferry Road south of Interstate 81. As I drove up her driveway I saw her waiting for me at her garage door. I parked and introduced myself. She pointed to the hill behind her sister's house, and said "that light was on the top of that hill behind my sister's house." She asked if I wanted her to go up the hill with me and suggested we could drive up the hill in my jeep. She also said her 86 year old sister wouldn't mind as she was at her exercise class. I thanked her, but said I would walk up the hill. Other than climbing through a barbed wire fence it was an easy trip up the hill. With the leaves off the trees and most of the ground vegetation dead it was easy to find the four tower stubs poking through the leaf

debris on the ground. The tower had been located at the very top of the hill. The tower legs were encased in a concrete footer that was above ground level. Other tower legs that I have found did not have any concrete visible above ground, but some were set in a concrete slab, like the one at the Crossville TN airport.

Many airway beacons were located on airports and are still in use today. The beacon on the grounds of the Crossville Tennessee airport is an excellent example of airway beacon construction and photos of the Crossville beacon are included below to show construction details.



Site of Beacon 25, the beacon tower was located on the crest of the hill.



Base of the beacon 25 tower. The tower was attached to the four steel posts.



Another view of the hill where Beacon 25 was located. View is looking southeast from Shipley Ferry road.



Another view of the base, showing how the legs were set in a concrete footer. The legs have 4 bolt holes for tower attachment and a single hole lower down for a brace attachment.



These pipes were the base of the ladder that gave access to the top of the tower for light maintenance. Compare to the photo of the Crossville, TN airport beacon base.



Close up of the base of the Crossville, TN airport beacon showing the stub set in concrete with the tower attached to by 4 bolts and a single bolt for brace attachment.



Another detail view of the Crossville, TN airport beacon tower showing the tubular base for the ladder attachment.