

THE A-BOMB.

Only now are we permitted to release pictures taken at Woomera, Britian's rocket and atomic-weapon testing ground in the South Australian desert. Here, on October the Fifteenth, Britain's second atomic-bomb was exploded.

About three weeks before the atom-test, Sir William Penney flew in from Britain, and immediately on went an Australian bush hat. Penney, knighted for his part in the Montebello tests, was mainly responsible for the design of the new weapon.

Many of the men who helped Penney in his experiments were at Woomera organising the lay-out of the area and arranging for full safety precautions to be taken. "Operation Totem" was the code-name, for the weapon was to be fired on a steel tower (believed to be about 200 feet high) which stood in the centre of the testing area. A visitor to the site was Mr. Duncan Sandys, Britain's Minister of Supply, who was touring Australia. As the firing day drew near, movie-cameras were set up to record the explosion in all its phases.

Only when weather conditions were perfect could the test take place - there could be no risk.

Meteorological experts studied their charts. Englishmen and Australians worked in close collaboration.

Balloons carried wind recording instruments high over the firing area. Back came the data - conditions O.K. Thirteen miles from the bomb, Sir William Penney waited for the flash and the great roar which would follow many seconds later.

Like a boiling cauldren, the giant fireball rose into the air. In a fraction of a second the steel tower had been vaporised. Following the first pressure wave, came a suction wave, which condensed the water in the air causing a dense vapour fog. Then, rockets, equipped with special recording apparatus were fired into the radio-active centre of the mushroom cloud.

Twisted into a s-shape by the wind, the great column of smoke sprawled across the morning sky. Sir William Penney and his team will not disclose details of the test. But it is known that the overall verdict is "a complete success".

Control of atomic weapons is certain to be discussed at the Big Four meeting. Great Britain, France, America, and the Soviet Union all agree that this mighty power, should be harnessed for the peaceful pursuits of mankind.

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