

b.p. 227

IMPORTANT NOTE: Release not before Thursday, 28th Feb. 1957.

OPERATION BUFFALO

Dope-Sheet for Black and White Film.

In September and October 1956 four atomic devices were exploded at the Maralinga Test Range by a team headed by Sir William Penney. The range, jointly constructed and maintained by the British and Australian Governments, is in the South Australian desert.

Two of the explosions were on towers, one was fired on the ground and the other was an air burst, the bomb being flown to the target area in a Valiant bomber of the R.A.F.

The operation was particularly unique in the personnel engaged. Scientists from Britain, Australia and Canada worked along with men from the British Army, Navy, and Air Force and the Australian Army. Support was afforded also by the Royal Australian Air Force. Servicemen from the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand were present at two explosions in the role of "indoctrinees", the purpose being to familiarise them with the effects of an atomic explosion.

For the first test, which was on a tower, various types of arms, stores, materials, aircraft, radar equipment, shelters, buildings, rail tracks, runways, etc., were exposed in the path of the blast along with dummies of men dressed in military uniforms. Some target items were also included in the case of the ground burst.

After each firing Canberra bombers flew into the atomic cloud to collect specimens and tracked it to the coast. Helicopters tested the area around the explosion. Scientists on foot moved forward to collect instruments and mark off the limits of the safe areas.

The film shows the arrival of Sir William Penney at Maralinga. Shots of Maralinga "village" include the transport section, living quarters, hospital, post office and kitchens.

The type of country is revealed in shots of jeep travelling over a sand road, camera observation towers, a Valiant on the runway and the general layout of the airstrip.

Various target response items were next shown being put into position, starting with a Centurion tank moving across country. A 25-pounder gun is shown being tested and tank guns firing. Subsequent shots show a 25-pounder and a Bofors A/A gun being installed in their gun pits. Radar equipment is brought up for siting.

A bulldozer pushes earth over shelters, a section of an aircraft wing is put into position, tubular framework set up and a corrugated iron section of a shelter installed.

Work of the Explosives Section is followed by a shot of the radar equipment and tanks and vehicles, a dummy soldier in a slit trench and various models of slit trenches, railway lines, lorries, guns, tanks and men.

Full-sized dummies are prepared for their part in the operation and various instruments and equipment is shown being set up. Food samples are buried in the ground, medical stores set out, and metal covers and sandbags placed over various specimens. Samples of materials are shown on a rack and instruments are being prepared.

A briefing at Health Control is followed by the Valiant take-off. Spectators turn their backs to the bomb before the explosion, and a quick survey shows the various target response items in position.

The Control Room Panel takes the sequence up to the explosion. The Valiant is shown flying its bomb to the target. Flash of the bomb. Views of the atomic cloud developing. One of the Canberra cloud-samplers takes off and this is followed by a shot of the target area after an explosion and helicopter views of a crater. The Canberra returns and filters are removed from the wing tips and placed in a bin.

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Dosemeters are issued to personnel and a line of respirators is shown. Scientists in protective clothing move into the target area to measure radio-activity. Shots of the target area show damage inflicted on lorries, trees, buildings, vehicles, guns and aircraft.

CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION.