

BRITAIN FIRST H-BOMB.

Cassidy Airfield, on Christmas Island in the far Pacific. Along this strip of coral, hundreds of miles from anywhere, is drawn up an R.A.F. task force of Valiants, Shackletons, and Canberras waiting to make history; for Britain's first hydrogen bomb is about to be exploded. From this day, Britain will rank beside America and Russia as a major nuclear Power. From the moment that the white-painted Valiant bomber takes off with its deadly load, Britain is no longer dependent on anyone for this ultimate deterrent.

On the control ship "Harvik" everyone who will be on deck puts on protective clothing as zero hour draws near. The explosion is to be at an altitude of several thousand feet, and even though the test has been carefully planned to produce the minimum of radio-active fall-out, observers many miles from the explosion must be protected from the searing rays of the flash itself.

Everyone is at his post - and the seconds are ticking away..

Not until ten seconds after the flash may anyone turn and look at the huge fire-ball, even through goggles; for so intense is this man-made sun that people ten miles away, with their backs turned and their hands over their eyes, are conscious of its fantastic brilliance.

As the heat spreads outwards, clouds are evaporated in a fraction of a second, and new ones created; but for the hundreds of technicians and scientists, busy taking their readings and making their notes, this is more than an awe-inspiring spectacle - it is a whole library of information that can be obtained in no other way. Here is another view of the tremendous explosion - taken from a Shackleton aircraft of the task force.

Not only has Britain joined the ranks of the H-Bomb Powers; she has made the great technical achievement of starting with an airborne H-Bomb - which neither America nor Russia was able to do. They both exploded their first H-Bomb from the ground before they were confident enough of success to attempt dropping one from the air.

With the release of these spectacular pictures of our first H-Bomb comes the news that we have already exploded a second and larger bomb. This series of tests changes the whole world situation; for pressure has been growing to end such tests altogether. Britain has pointed out that it would be unfair to ban them while she alone, of the three great powers, had no H-Bomb of her own. Perhaps it will be easier to reach agreement of this controversial problem, now that America, Russia and Britain stand on an equal footing!