

Building The H Bomb A Personal History

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in this engaging scientific memoir kenneth ford recounts the time when in his mid twenties he was a member of the team that designed and built the first hydrogen bomb he worked with and relaxed with scientific giants of that time such as edward teller enrico fermi stan ulam john von neumann and john wheeler and here offers illuminating insights into the personalities the strengths and the quirks of these men well known for his ability to explain physics to

nonspecialists ford also brings to life the physics of fission and fusion and provides a brief history of nuclear science from the discovery of radioactivity in 1896 to the ten megaton explosion of mike that obliterated a pacific island in 1952 ford worked at both los alamos and princeton s project matterhorn and brings out matterhorn s major but previously unheralded contribution to the development of the h bomb outside the lab he drove a battered chevrolet around new mexico a bantam motorcycle across the country and a british roadster around new jersey part of the charm of ford s book is the way in which he leavens his well researched descriptions of the scientific work with brief tales of his life away from weapons

discusses the research and development of the hydrogen or thermonuclear bomb and the nuclear arms race

this book written with unique access to official archives tells the secret story of britain s h bomb the scientific and strategic background the government s policy decision the work of the remarkable men who created the bomb the four weapon trials at a remote pacific atoll in 1957 58 and the historic consequences

the menace the mechanism and the men

super bomb unveils the story of the events leading up to president harry s truman s 1950 decision to develop a super or hydrogen bomb that fateful decision and its immediate consequences are detailed in a diverse and complete account built on newly released archives and previously hidden contemporaneous interviews with more than sixty political military and scientific figures who were involved in the decision ken young and warner r schilling present the expectations hopes and fears of the key individuals who lobbied for and against developing the h bomb they portray the conflicts that arose over the h bomb as rooted in the distinct interests of the atomic energy commission the los alamos laboratory the pentagon and state department the congress and the white house but as they clearly show once truman made his decision in 1950 resistance to the h bomb opportunistically shifted to new debates about the development of tactical nuclear weapons continental air defense and other aspects of nuclear weapons policy what super bomb reveals is that in many ways the h bomb struggle was a proxy battle over the morality and effectiveness of strategic bombardment and the role and doctrine of the us strategic air command

in the day we lost the h bomb science writer barbara moran marshals a wealth of new information and recently declassified material to give the definitive account of the cold war s biggest nuclear weapons disaster on january 17 1966 a u s air force b 52 bomber exploded over the sleepy spanish farming village of palomares during a routine airborne refueling the explosion killed seven airmen and scattered the bomber s payload four unarmed thermonuclear bombs across miles of coastline three of the rogue h bombs were recovered quickly tracking down the fourth required the largest search and salvage operation in u s military history moran traces the roots of the palomares incident giving a brief yet in depth history of the strategic air command and its eccentric larger than life commander general curtis lemay whose massive deterrence strategy kept armed u s bombers aloft at all times back on the ground moran recounts the myriad social and environmental effects of an accident that spread radioactive debris over hundreds of acres of spanish farmland alarmed america s strategic allies and damaged spanish american diplomatic relations as the american military floundered in its attempt to keep the story secret the events in spain sometimes took on farcical overtones constant global media hype was fueled by the hit james bond movie thunderball with its plot about an atomic weapon lost at sea in addition there were the unwanted attentions of a rusty hulled soviet surveillance ship and even awkward public relations stunts complete with american diplomats in swim trunks the day we lost the h bomb is a singular work of military history that effortlessly and dramatically captures cold war hysteria high stakes negotiations and the race to clean up a disaster of unprecedented scope at once epic and intimate this book recounts in stunning detail the fragile peace americans had made with nuclear weapons and how the specter of imminent doom forced the united states to consider not only what had happened over palomares but what could have happened this forgotten chapter of cold war history will grip readers with the tension of that time and reawaken the fears and hopes of that dangerous era

one of the first applications of the atomic bomb after nuclear war i was to serve as the trigger for much more powerful hydrogen bombs the explosion of an atom bomb emits nuclear radiation heat energy and photons these emissions compress fusion fuel to thermonuclear conditions from 1945 to 1949 the united states had a monopoly on nuclear weapons until august 29 1949 when the ussr exploded its first nuclear device edward teller was already actively working on the design of hydrogen bombs but j robert oppenheimer opposed these efforts it was president harry s truman who approved the us program to design build and test hydrogen bombs meanwhile the ussr had been secretly working on nuclear weapons since 1941 with extensive help from several spies including klaus fuchs both the united states and the ussr achieved early success with hydrogen bombs as was demonstrated by hundreds of test explosions that spread radioactive fallout around the entire earth it was the us bravo test of a huge hydrogen explosive device on march 1 1954 that brought matters

to a conclusion the radioactive fallout proved to be lethal over thousands of square miles the result was an international ban on testing nuclear weapons in the atmosphere 1963 however the wizards of armageddon were busily preparing to fight and maybe win future wars fought with hydrogen bombs these plans included risky maneuvers with live hydrogen bombs on planes submarines and other mobile devices accidents happened and many hydrogen bombs were lost blown apart or simply abandoned the absolute worst aspect of hydrogen bomb explosions is global ecocide the explosions are so powerful they harm the ozone layer and ignite huge fires on earth that darken the skies the latter was termed nuclear winter by carl sagan the conclusion of this book is very simple all hydrogen bombs should be banned forever

a biography of the hungarian born jewish physicist whose work in developing the atomic and hydrogen bombs as well as the weapons system known as the strategic defense initiative still generates controversy

steiner analyzes how and why brodie s understanding of weapons of unparalleled explosive force led him to posit the need for revolutionary strategic thinking in broadminded analytic method and in the focus upon cities as nuclear targets he shows the tremendous effect brodie s work had on the intellectual climate in which policy is determined particularly in his frequent combatting of conventional wisdom

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