



The Bomb: The 1945 Test of the First Atomic Bomb

The National Atomic Museum and the White Sands Missile Range Public Affairs Office

Read by:	David Wales	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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On July 16, 1945 at 5:29 am the United States Army detonated the first atomic bomb on the USAAF Alamogordo Bombing and Gunnery Range in the Jornada del Muerto desert 35 miles southeast of Socorro, New Mexico. It was a key event in the Manhattan Project, a top secret effort to develop fissile material led by Major General Leslie Groves of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers that grew to employ over 130,000 people and cost about \$27 billion in today's dollars. The weapons were developed at the Los Alamos Laboratory that was directed by nuclear physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer. The test was code-named "Trinity" after the poetry of John Donne and involved the detonation of an implosion-design plutonium device nicknamed

"The Gadget" that was similar to the "Fat Man" bomb later detonated over Nagasaki, Japan on August 9, 1945. The complexity of the design led to concerns about whether the device would work, and that, in turn, led to the decision to conduct a nuclear test. The test was planned and directed by Kenneth Nichols. The two readings in this volume are of government publications, the first released by the National Atomic Museum in 1984 and the second by the White Sands Missile Range Public Affairs Office in 1995.

The National Museum of Nuclear Science & History, formerly The National Atomic Museum, is a national repository of information about nuclear science located in Albuquerque, New Mexico that was established by the 102nd Congress during the administration of George H. W. Bush. It was originally established as the Sandia Atomic Museum in 1969 at Kirtland Air Force Base and was staffed by the USAF with help from the Sandia National Laboratories (SNL). The name was changed to the National Atomic Museum in 1973. It was made a part of the Department of Energy (DOE) in 1985. The National Atomic Museum Foundation (NAMF) was created 1992 to reduce the financial burden to taxpayers. The DOE transferred the museum operations to SNL in 1995 and Museum staff became NAMF employees.

The White Sands Missile Range is a U. S. Army testing area spanning nearly 3,200 square miles that ranges over parts of six counties in southern New Mexico. It is the largest military installation in the United States. The White Sands Proving Ground was established on July 9, 1945 to test German and American long range rockets. The Trinity atomic bomb test was conducted at the Trinity site near the northern boundary of the range seven days later. The Trinity Site was designated a National Historic Landmark district in 1965 and was listed on the National register of Historic Places in 1966.