

# PM

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# Newsmen Visit Atom Bomb Area; Find Earth Fused Like Sheet of Glass

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OSCURA, N. M., Sept. 12.—The Government displayed the world's first atomic bomb crater to news correspondents here Sunday and gave the lie to Japanese propaganda that radioactivity killed persons entering Hiroshima long after the Aug. 6 bombing there.

Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, commanding general of the atomic bomb project, revealed that even Japanese sources now admit that all harmful radioactivity had disappeared from smashed Hiroshima 11 days after our bomb hit.

A group of 21 correspondents and photographers walked all over the area Sunday where the first atom bomb in history was exploded.

They wore no protective clothing except light canvas "booties" over their regular shoes. They went into the core of the bomb crater where radioactivity would be "hottest."

## Ground Like Glass

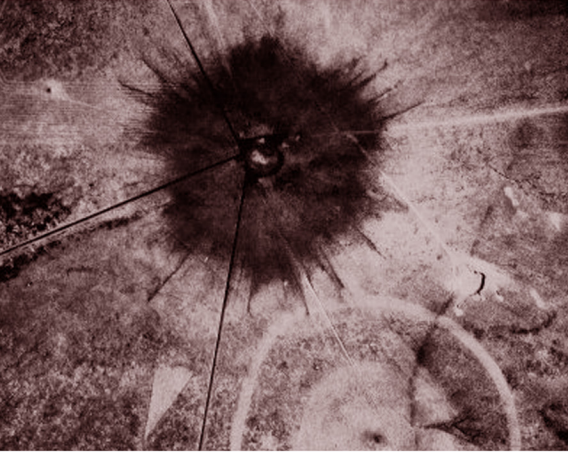
They picked up and pocketed pieces of the atom-fused earth crust that covered the area like a sheet of gray-green, crackled glass.

And they were convinced that they would not die within a few weeks or that their hair and teeth would fall out as Japanese propaganda would have the world believe.

The correspondents flown here by the War Dept., traveled by motor coaches into a broad, flat valley at the foot of the Oscura mountains. Before stepping out on the ground, they were handed the bag-like booties to tie over their shoes. Groves said they were "merely to make sure you don't pick up any stray particle of material that might be active."

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The newsmen found themselves walking on a brittle crust that was formed as the unearthly heat of the bomb melted the surface of the ground and fused it into a glassy substance. Told they could enter the "crater," they looked for a deep jagged pit such as the traditional explosive bomb digs. Instead, the atomic "crater" was like a huge plate with a saucer in its center.

The "plate," covered by the gray-green fused crust, was a rough circle 2400 feet in diameter, its center sunk 10 feet below the outer rim. The center "saucer," which was directly beneath the bomb, was 300 feet across and another 10 feet deep in its center.

The surface of the depressed area was smooth. It was not gouged or dug out in irregular fashion as TNT might tear a hole. But the depression was caused, the scientists explained, by the terrific pressure of the blast which compressed the earth so violently that it "stamped" the surface as much as 20 feet below its original level.

### Complete Devastation

Beyond the fused, 2400-foot circle was another area 4800 feet across in which devastation was complete. As the height of the actual bomb explosion was increased, the devastation circle was enlarged—and the amount of radioactivity deposited into the earth was decreased.

Groves and a group of top-flight scientists gave these latest facts:

¶ The so-called "test bomb" set off here and the bomb which blew Hiroshima off the map were essentially the same. The New Mexico bomb was no laboratory miniature.

¶ The Japanese relief workers who, Radio Tokyo claimed, received fatal burns when they went into devastated Hiroshima after the bombing, actually were in that city when the bomb exploded. They did not get their injuries from continuing radioactivity.

¶ The Japanese admit that there is no harmful X-ray activity now and that plant life already is growing again.

¶ There was more radioactivity in the atomized New Mexico area than possibly could have existed at Hiroshima because of the different altitudes at which the two

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bombs were exploded.

¶ The Hiroshima bomb was set off at a "considerably higher" altitude than the one here in a deliberate effort to spread the devastation and to avoid "contamination" of the Japanese earth.

¶ Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, of the University of California, perhaps the world's leading theoretical physicist, personally determined the height at which the Hiroshima bomb was fired.

¶ An American mission is making its own investigation of the atomic effects in Japan and already has reported some findings.

"We anticipated that the bulk of the deaths at Hiroshima would result from the actual blast and from flying debris," Groves said. "After the New Mexico blast, we expected a number of persons to be burned from the heat of it all."

The greatest death toll, he explained, would occur in the center of the blast area from the initial heat and debris.

"A few persons who, by some break, escaped the effects of the blast, flying debris and heat in this area," he said, "may have received fatal gamma (X-ray) ray exposures."

From information already transmitted to the U. S. A., Groves said, it is obvious that the burns received by survivors were not properly treated "as we know how to treat these burns."

## Area Examined

Japanese sources, Groves said, disclosed that the Hiroshima area was examined six days after the blast and again 10 days afterward.

"These Japanese sources say that they found less radioactivity than the tolerance dose 11 days after the blast," he said. "In our language, that means that a man could live right there forever."

The Japanese still claim that deaths continue among Hiroshima victims, he said, but they no longer give alleged causes. This change in reports was attributed by Groves to the fact that their propaganda claims were tripped up by erroneous and impossible "symptoms" attributed to atomic bomb victims.

He said that X-rays deaths were "expected" but that the number would be "small."

Asked if the actual death toll at Hiroshima was known, Groves said it was not and that he doubted if it ever would be.

"What counts is that it stopped the war sooner than otherwise," he said. "The Japanese were licked before the atomic bomb but they just wouldn't admit it."