

TESTING

The US nuclear obliteration of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ushered in the beginning of an era during which hundreds of nuclear bombs were exploded. The US detonated at least 100 nuclear bombs over and around Pacific islands, until these atmospheric "test" explosions were finally banned in 1963. The Pacific islanders living in the radioactive shadow of the US nuclear weapons testing program suffered many adverse health effects as a result of these atomic explosions. So did US servicemen who were exposed to the radioactive fallout while monitoring the blasts.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, the US often used B-52 Stratofortresses to drop their nuclear bombs in the Pacific. For example, in May 1956, a B-52 dropped a hydrogen bomb near the Bikini Islands. Although the 3.8 megaton explosion was about 5 miles off course and test instruments could not collect data, the detonation served a political role. It signaled, to the USSR, the US ability to air drop a thermonuclear bomb.

In 1962, during "Operation Dominic I," 29 nuclear bombs were dropped from B-52s near the Christmas and Johnston Islands. Dennis Smith, a US atomic veteran who monitored these atomic explosions from a nearby ship, said: "These were the ones where you had your x-ray pictures taken, guys."

The largest of these blasts, the "Housatonic" was 8.3 megatons, i.e., 400 times more powerful than the 20 kiloton bomb that leveled Hiroshima. (A kiloton is equivalent to 1000 tons of TNT, a megaton is 1 million tons.)

ACCIDENTS

Over the past 45 years there have been dozens of nuclear warplane accidents including mid-air collisions, crashes and accidentally dropping bombs. Although such near-catastrophic nuclear events have not occurred during air shows, the same types of nuclear aircraft that have "performed" in Canada have been involved in these incidents. These include:

- A-4 Skyhawk
- B-36 Peacemaker
- B-52 Stratofortress
- B-52H Stratofortress
- CH-47D Chinook
- F-4 Phantom
- F-100 Super Sabre
- F-86 Sabre



**B-52
Stratofortress**

- During the Cold War, there were at least 16 publicly-known nuclear crises in which the US threatened to wage nuclear war against its enemies. In several cases, the US threatened nuclear war using the same kinds of weapons delivery systems that have been used to amuse the Canadian public during war shows. For instance, the US deployed B-52s with nuclear weapons during at least the following crises:
- Cuban missile crisis (1962)
 - Vietnam war (1969)
 - Yom Kippur war (1973)
 - Iran (1980)



B-52s have entertained huge crowds at Canadian military air shows in: Abbotsford, London, Ottawa & Toronto.



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